



UNHCR PSEA/SH 2023 Snapshot

An Updated 2023-2025 Strategy and Action Plan

Since 2018, UNHCR has taken a comprehensive approach to tackling sexual misconduct, both Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Sexual Harassment (SH), under a single coordinated effort. With the establishment of dedicated Office to oversee these efforts, UNHCR has developed capacity and provided support and expertise in coordination, policy development and implementation, field support, training and learning development and delivery, victim support, and external and interagency engagement.

Building on the achievements of the previous years, an updated [Strategy and Action Plan](#) was released in early 2023. The new Strategy focuses on translating global guidance, standards, and policy to UNHCR's operational realities, strengthening capacity to tackle sexual misconduct at the field level, pushing forward the implementation of [UNHCR's Policy on a Victim-Centred Approach in Response to Sexual Misconduct](#), and maintaining an active role in interagency efforts to expand and harmonize this area of work in the sector as whole.

Launch of NotOnlyMe to Support Victims of Sexual Harassment

In an effort to strengthen support to victims of sexual harassment, UNHCR developed and launched [NotOnlyMe](#). The online tool is a confidential mechanism for victims to record their experience of sexual harassment and allows them to submit the incident

into a secure and encrypted online matching escrow system to anonymously be alerted if someone else has recorded their harasser. The tool also allows the user to anonymously chat with a UNHCR Victim Care Officer for support and guidance.

Experience with such tools has shown that victims of sexual harassment are more likely to choose to come forward for support and to report if they know that the person who has harassed them has harassed others. With more than 160 accounts created on the platform, and over 30 incidents submitted for matching, NotOnlyMe has already seen promising use, with a number of matches being made, and users engaging with a victim care officer to explore the options and resources UNHCR has in place for their choice of resolution process. Although too early to identify trends, the tool has shown encouraging signs in building confidence of victims to come forward to seek support.

Expansion of the Victim Care Team

A cornerstone of UNHCR's efforts to tackle sexual misconduct is in ensuring a victim-centred approach. A key component of that effort has been in the establishment of the function of the Victim Care Officer, a clinical psychologist whose role it is to provide advice, guidance and support to victims of sexual harassment, as well as advice and guidance to managers. Since the establishment of the role, increased engagement by victims of sexual harassment, including through NotOnlyMe, and growing demand for additional support resources called for the expansion of the function and in 2023, a second Victim Care Officer was recruited.

More than 80 victims of sexual harassment have been supported by a UNHCR Victim Care Officer in 2023, with some 74% choosing to engage in a resolution process.

As the first function of its kind within the System, UNHCR's Victim Care Officer has also helped pave the way for the establishment of similar policies and functions within the system through guidance and support to various interagency bodies.

Roll-out of UNHCR's Internal Learning Package

Since the launch of UNHCR's internal Learning Package on protection from SEA and SH in 2021, rollout of the trainings has been ongoing with regional PSEA Focal Points and in-country facilitators, providing materials and capacity for interactive, engaging, and more accessible all-staff training on sexual misconduct. By the end of 2023, 37 UNHCR operations have rolled out (or are in the process of rolling out) the one-day training on PSEA, and 31 operations rolled out the half-day training on sexual harassment. Both courses are available in five UN languages. Direct in-person training support was provided by the Office of the Principal Adviser on PSEA/SH in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Pakistan, Kenya, and to the Regional Bureau for Southern Africa. A regional Training-of-Trainers on the Learning Package was also delivered to 11 operations in the Eastern and the Horn of Africa and the Western Africa regions, with focus on the Sudan emergency response. Remote support and guidance were provided to 45 operations in their efforts to roll-out the two training packages.

In addition, content on PSEA and SH has been integrated and delivered in 11 organization-wide trainings, directly reaching over 1,000 UNHCR personnel in 2023, including on PSEA/SH in emergency response, PSEA inter-agency coordination, and PSEA/SH fundamentals for HR professionals. This marks a 20% increase from 2022, and over 200% increase from 2021.



ICVA/UNHCR Community Outreach and Communications Fund

The [Joint ICVA/UNHCR PSEA Community Outreach and Communications Fund](#), an initiative established under the [High Commissioner's 2020 IASC Champion on PSEA and SH](#), delivered a fourth round of funding to NGOs working on PSEA in 2023. Managed by the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), the Fund invests in community-led efforts to ensure that communities and SEA survivors know how and where to safely report allegations of SEA, in line with established IASC priorities. Since its inception, the Fund has received over 5,000 applications for funding from over 100 countries. Many applications specifically address SEA risks and challenges exacerbated by conflict, health crises, and climate change, whilst also targeting groups at heightened risk of SEA such as women and girls with disabilities, sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) diverse individuals, and geographically isolated communities. The Fund has become a key inter-agency project supporting the localization agenda and has so far supported 56 projects in 39 countries, reaching over 2 million people with awareness raising activities.

An external review of the Fund's work conducted in 2023 found that 87% of the projects resulted in a significant increase in awareness of SEA and 85% reported an increase in reporting following the awareness campaigns. As a positive effect, 86% of organizations that received support reported that their PSEA capacity was strengthened.

Participation in the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme

In addition to being an active member of the UN system's ClearCheck, which prevents the re-hire of perpetrators within the UN system through vetting and reference checking, UNHCR remains the only UN Agency to implement the [Misconduct Disclosure Scheme](#), a similar tool used among NGO partners for vetting and reference checking to prevent the rehire of perpetrators of sexual misconduct.

In 2023, UNHCR expanded the number of participating operations from the initial three piloting the Scheme to seven, targeting the largest operations with high risks of SEA. The Scheme ensures the screening of all UNHCR international and local recruitments (staff and affiliate) in participating countries.