

# JOINING UP FORCES AGAINST SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

## Advocating and mobilizing

Last year one of our key priorities was to strengthen our advocacy efforts, both internally and within the broader humanitarian community. We worked to ensure that greater space is given to the voices of colleagues and victims/survivors of sexual misconduct, seeking to further mobilize action.

- ➔ In 2019, we held [an informal exchange dedicated to protection from sexual harassment](#) during which real testimonies of victims/survivors were read by the United Nations Theater Club. The event was livestreamed to all colleagues across UNHCR.
- ➔ This informal exchange was also an opportunity to present the results of our [Ideas Challenge to better address sexual harassment in the workplace](#), which was launched in September 2018. Out of the 42 proposals submitted, four were selected and showcased during the event. The winning ideas that received funding for piloting were: “pop-up” messages on computer screens to sensitize on sexual misconduct, an office atmosphere indicator tool, and “barbershop” discussions convened as safe spaces for men to talk to men about sexual harassment.
- ➔ In our efforts to improve our working culture we also rolled out an innovative training for managers. Thus far, over 370 colleagues with managerial responsibilities across five regions participated in [“Reflective Leadership Dialogues”](#), which are ongoing. The

participants are given a chance to reflect on their roles as agents of change, considering how gender, power and other dynamics affect work environments.

- ➔ [Code of Conduct Dialogues](#) took place in 17 operations, reaching more than 2,000 colleagues since the new biennial theme “Values in Action – Trust and Collaboration” was launched in October 2019. With revamped methodologies and tools, we engaged with colleagues in open dialogue and self-reflection on our own behavior and its impact on others; we focused on supporting ethical behavior and decision making and on tackling abusive behaviours, including sexual misconduct.
- ➔ The High Commissioner took over the role of [Inter-Agency Standing Committee Champion on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment](#) in September. A number of [key initiatives](#) will be undertaken over his one-year tenure, based on the three pillars of bolstering prevention, expanding safe spaces, and promoting a respectful use of authority.



📷 Senior Programme Assistant Doreen Lyimo travelled from Dar es Salaam, the United Republic of Tanzania, to present her team’s computer “pop-up” idea to a live audience in Geneva. © UNHCR/Wendy Tilbe



📷 UN High Commissioner for Refugees Grandi and UNICEF Executive Director Fore joined forces against sexual misconduct during a joint UNICEF-UNHCR informal exchange at UNHCR headquarters in Geneva. © UNHCR/Susan Hopper

## Strengthening coordination and capacity

Since the launch of our [strategy](#) mid-2018, we have focused on enhancing our internal capacity to fight sexual misconduct, including through a reinforced safeguarding structure and by bringing together colleagues from different services.



📍 SEA awareness workshops at the Integrated Assistance Centre in Maicao, Colombia, are an opportunity to learn in a safe space.  
© UNHCR/Ruben Salgado Escudero

- In 2019, we worked more closely with our risk management experts to **better identify and mitigate potential risks associated with sexual misconduct** in field locations. We also incorporated content on prevention and response to sexual misconduct in all risk management training.
- We increased our capacity to **run systematic sexual misconduct checks in our recruitment processes** using the UN "Clear Check" trackers for sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and sexual harassment (SH). This is crucial to ensure perpetrators cannot move within the organization or from one to another.
- Additional resources were allocated to **our Senior Coordinator on prevention of and response to SEA and SH**, who plays a central role in ensuring a comprehensive and coherent approach to addressing sexual misconduct across our organization.
- We strengthened our **field-based network of over 400 focal points on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse**. They received online and face-to-face technical support and training, which included regional workshops gathering focal points from a total of 64 operations. The number of colleagues on our interactive platform for exchange of good practice, as well as access to information and resources, increased by 60% last year, reflecting strengthened engagement across the board.
- To better address security-related issues, we piloted a one-week training for our security personnel on **Gender Inclusion in Security Management**, which included addressing personal bias, psychological first aid, and sensitive responses to incidents of sexual misconduct. In addition, 800 female colleagues from UNHCR, UN agencies, and partner organizations across 17 countries benefitted from a **Women's Security Awareness Training**.
- We developed a **new face-to-face training programme on protection from SEA** based on materials from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and we designed along the same interactive methodology a **module on addressing sexual harassment**. The package is for all UNHCR colleagues and will be piloted and rolled out to our regional and country operations throughout 2020.
- Working closely with other humanitarian entities, we funded the development of an **interagency training package on protection from sexual misconduct for partners**. The package is based, in part, on IOM materials and fills a big gap in terms of harmonized, face-to-face training on sexual misconduct. It is opening opportunities for synergy-building in the field, including through joint delivery.

## Empowering victims/survivors and colleagues

Victims and survivors are at the center of everything we do. Through continuous efforts we aim to ensure that colleagues feel safe, free to speak up as well as to seek advice and support. Continuing drive for culture change is essential in addressing the imbalances of power and gender inequalities that give rise to sexual misconduct.

- ➔ Last year, we continued promoting the role of our **psy-  
chosocial case manager**, who offers guidance to victims/  
survivors and witnesses of sexual harassment. So far, 88  
colleagues have benefited from her support and have  
been accompanied towards resolution. This role has now  
extended to advising managers on how to handle situations  
of sexual misconduct and to mitigate risks in their offices.



📍 On the left, Zuhura Mahamed, UNHCR's psychosocial case manager, leading a group discussion on working together. © UNHCR/Melanie Senelle

- ➔ We created and are currently training a **global Peer Advisor Network consisting of 400 colleagues**. They act as a point of contact in their respective offices for workplace grievances, ethical dilemmas, and psychosocial concerns, including sexual harassment.
- ➔ In 2019, we made significant investments in more than 30 countries across all regions to strengthen **field mechanisms that are available to the people we work for to safely report misconduct**, including SEA, and to reinforce **the safety and security of survivors of sexual and gender-based violence**. This contributed to putting in place procedures at the field level to ensure the safety of victims/survivors and guide their referral to services such as health, psychosocial and legal support.
- ➔ Under the Safe from the Start programme, we deployed **experts on protection from sexual and gender-based violence in humanitarian emergencies in 11 operations**. These colleagues played a crucial role with regards to protection from SEA through quality programming, advising on risk mitigation and interagency coordination.

- ➔ We continued to promote the **independent and confidential "SpeakUp! Helpline"** which offers all UNHCR colleagues the opportunity to report misconduct or raise concerns 24/7, with the option to remain anonymous.



📍 Representation Office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, shows their support for a speak up culture. ©UNHCR/Asnat Mulugeta

- ➔ We launched a global **stocktaking of information, education and communication materials related to sexual misconduct**. Context-appropriate materials are critical to raise awareness and enhance prevention. They help ensure that victims/survivors and persons at risk know where and how to safely report incidents and threats of sexual misconduct. The stocktaking results will support improved communication on the issue.



📍 Powerful videos have been developed as case studies for new face-to-face trainings on sexual misconduct. © IASC/DÉTROIT



## Improving systems and policies

We recently strengthened our safeguarding structure and continued to improve our systems and policies in relation to sexual misconduct. We also lead and contribute to coordinated initiatives in the broader humanitarian sector. Our internal and external engagement is driven by the needs and experiences of our colleagues and of the communities with whom we work.



📷 Drama productions in Meheba, Zambia, raise awareness on SEA and sexual and gender-based violence. © UNHCR/ H el ene Caux

- ➔ An [independent review of our existing procedures and policies on PSEA](#) was completed last year. It identified good practices, gaps and lessons learned, with [recommendations](#) to be incorporated into our new 2020-2021 action plan on addressing sexual misconduct.
- ➔ We launched an [internal review of existing mechanisms and protocols to ensure the safety, security and well-being of victims/survivors](#). It will inform further policy work and upcoming guidance on addressing sexual misconduct.
- ➔ In the context of regionalization, we integrated into [managerial job descriptions](#) responsibilities to combat SEA and sexual harassment and to create respectful, safe, and inclusive working environments.
- ➔ In 2019, we contributed to two interagency [fora where heads of investigation services of UN agencies and NGOs consolidate resources and share expertise](#) to harmonize approaches and strengthen sexual misconduct investigations.
- ➔ We maintained close cooperation with the [Office of the Special Coordinator on SEA](#) and the [UN Victims' Rights Advocate](#). In the [Inter-Agency Standing Committee](#), UNHCR co-chairs the results group that focuses among others on the eradication of SEA and sexual harassment in the humanitarian system. In September 2019, the Deputy High Commissioner took the interim Chair of the UN Chief Executives Board [Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment](#).
- ➔ We continued to engage in [regular and transparent dialogue with member States](#), including through quarterly briefings organized with our principal donors. We also contributed to the valuable [work on standards setting in relation to sexual misconduct](#) undertaken by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and by the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN).