



Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) by aid workers violates core humanitarian principles and is prohibited conduct. SEA not only inflicts serious harm on those we are mandated to protect but jeopardizes the credibility of all humanitarian and development organizations. In 2016, the Iraq Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator established the inter-agency Iraq Protection from SEA Network to implement the Secretary-General's [Bulletin](#) on Special Measures for PSEA and promote accountability to affected populations.

What is SEA?

Exploitation: Any actual or attempted abuse of position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including *inter alia* profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from beneficiaries and consensual sex in exchange for money regardless if prostitution is legal under local law.

Abuse: Actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

All sexual activity with a child (under age 18) regardless of consent or local age of majority. Mistaken belief as to age is never an excuse.

The Iraq PSEA Network

Since 2020, Co-Chaired by UNHCR and UNICEF designated staff. Membership includes a Coordinator and Co-Coordinator, Focal Points from each of 19 UN Agencies and missions in Iraq, and 3 seats allocated for I/NGOs.

Serves as the inter-agency body for PSEA coordination and oversight, referral of complaints, establishment and review of policies/guidance, and implementation of the *2021 PSEA Action Plan Priorities for Iraq*, endorsed by the UNCT.

Organizes training and awareness raising to reduce risks and mitigate effects of violations.

The UN has a **Zero Tolerance** policy toward Sexual Exploitation & Abuse



It is **mandatory** for all UN/partner staff and contractors to formally report all suspicions of SEA
Those who report are **protected from retaliation**

How to Submit a Complaint

A complaint can be made by or on behalf of a survivor via internal Agency pathways, and/or:

- **PSEA Network dedicated confidential email:** iraq-psea@un.org
- **Iraq Information Center (IIC):** toll-free and confidentially at 800699999
- Other Complaint & Feedback Mechanisms

Where possible, the *PSEA Iraq Inter-Agency Complaints Referral Form* should be used

Where does the complaint go?

- 👉 Within 36 hours: The PSEA Coordinator logs and refers a complaint to the Head of the concerned UN Agency/mission and most senior staff of the partner agency (if relevant).
- 👉 The concerned Agency/mission follows internal PSEA procedures to investigate and share feedback with the Network Coordinator.

(For more information, see *Iraq Inter-Agency SOP on Recording and Processing SEA Complaints*)

Ensuring Confidentiality

Confidentiality is critical, including password protection of files and limited dissemination

- Prior to recording, inform a complainant of the mandatory reporting and confidentiality policy.
- Humanitarian/development actors **always** have a duty to report, even if a survivor wishes to remain anonymous or does not wish to formally lodge a complaint.

Survivor Assistance

Survivor assistance is never linked to the nature of a report or outcome of an investigation.

All survivors are entitled to safe and confidential assistance and should be immediately referred to GBV and/or CP relevant service providers on their consent.

For more information, contact PSEA Network Coordinators Marion Lesueur (lesueur@unhcr.org) and Vedasto Nsanzugwanko (vnsanzugwanko@unicef.org)