



জাতিসংঘ আবাসিক সমন্বয়কারীর কার্যালয় - বাংলাদেশ

OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS RESIDENT COORDINATOR IN BANGLADESH

**Rohingya Refugee Humanitarian Response:
PSEA Statement from the UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh**

Dhaka, 24 October 2017: Further to the Secretary-General's Bulletin "Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse", I would like to ensure protection of refugees from sexual exploitation and abuse by members of the humanitarian community in Bangladesh. The purpose of this statement is to express our collective commitment to zero tolerance of any activities contrary to the spirit and content of the SG's Bulletin.

All organisations and entities, including members of the UN system, international and national NGOs, military personnel, government authorities, civil society and private contractors, have a duty of care to people affected by the ongoing crisis in Cox's Bazaar.

This duty of care includes a responsibility to ensure that each individual is treated with dignity and respect and receives assistance equally and safely regardless of sex, age, and ability. It also requires that people have the right to information; the ability to have recourse if they feel the help they receive is not adequate or has unwelcome consequences; and also the right to participate in decisions that directly affect their lives.

Sexual exploitation and abuse of those we seek to assist constitute the most serious breach of accountability towards the refugees and impacted members of the host community. It erodes the confidence and trust of affected communities in all those providing assistance while damaging our collective integrity.

All responders to this emergency are bound by the legal framework of their respective governing institutions. The UN's Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse is widely accepted by the broader humanitarian community as it prohibits behaviours including, but not limited to, sexual activity with children (person under the age of 18) regardless of the age of majority or consent locally, sexual favours in exchange for any form of assistance, sexual harassment, misconduct and behaviour with children or any other persons while delivering aid or services. Furthermore, sexual relationships between staff and those receiving assistance are strongly discouraged, and any suspicion of sexual exploitation and abuse by a fellow worker of the same or another agency must be reported through established reporting mechanisms. Managers are specifically charged with developing proper reporting mechanisms. Any violation of these principles constitutes serious misconduct.

In order to ensure that SEA prevention and response is prioritised in Cox's Bazaar, a collective initiative is needed to operationalise our commitments. The RC's office supports the establishment of a PSEA Network to oversee and implement this PSEA initiative, which will include a common complaint mechanism and coordinated awareness-raising for the community and partners. The proactive involvement of all our organisations will promote our adherence to zero tolerance of SEA and improve our ability to eradicate this serious misconduct from our operations.

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