

# Iraq PSEA Network—Fact Sheet

## Introduction

- Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) by aid workers is a serious problem that directly contradicts the very principles of humanitarian action. Not only does SEA inflict harm on those whom we are mandated to protect, it also jeopardizes the credibility and reputation of all humanitarian organizations.
- In July 2016, the Resident Coordinator (RC)/Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) established the inter-agency Iraq Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Network. The Network's main objective is to implement the Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse ([ST/SGB/2003/13](#)) and to promote further accountability to affected populations.

## The PSEA Network

- The PSEA network in Iraq is **Co-Chaired** by UNFPA and WFP Country Representatives who report directly to the RC/HC. Membership includes one **Focal Point** and one **Alternate** from each UN Agency operating in Iraq and from UNAMI, as well as a dedicated **Coordinator** and a **Co-Coordinator**.
- The PSEA Network serves as the primary body for coordination and oversight on PSEA, including establishing and/or adapting policies, guidelines, procedures, and mechanisms, as well as organizing activities and advocacy to reduce the risk of SEA and mitigate the effects caused by violations.
- 2017 Priorities: Engagement and advocacy with the Government and NGOs, and the establishment of a pool of trained SEA investigators.

## How does it work?

- According to the SG Bulletin, a United Nations Staff Member, Implementing Partner, Contractor, etc. **must report** any concerns or suspicions regarding SEA.
- The PSEA Network has Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on receiving, recording, logging, and referring cases of SEA to relevant agencies for follow-up and assistance (as required). These SOPs should complement your Organization's internal PSEA policies.

## Submitting a Complaint

- Complaints should be submitted on the **SEA Complaints Form** (see Annex) and should include as much information as possible regarding the survivor, the incident, and the alleged perpetrator.

## What is SEA?

- **Sexual Exploitation** is any actual or attempted abuse of a person in a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.
- **Sexual Abuse** is the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.
- *All sexual activity with a child (**person under the age of 18**) is considered sexual abuse regardless of the local age of majority or consent. (ST/SGB/2003/13)*

SEA can be seen as a **form of GBV**, as victims of SEA are often abused because of their vulnerable status as women, girls, boys or even men.

- **A Complaint** can be made by or on behalf of a survivor through:
  - The free **UN IDP Call Centre (80069999)** where operators have been specially trained;
  - Other **complaints mechanisms**;
  - Directly to the **PSEA Network Coordinators**: [emond@unfpa.org](mailto:emond@unfpa.org); [phyza.jameel@wfp.org](mailto:phyza.jameel@wfp.org).

## Referral and Investigation:

- The PSEA Coordinator will log the complaint and will refer it to the concerned Agency's PSEA Focal Point no later than 36 hours after reception. The concerned Agency is the Agency where the alleged perpetrator works or holds a contract (i.e. an employee of an Agency's Implementing Partner or contractor).
  - ⇒ The concerned Agency is then responsible for following its internal PSEA procedures to conduct an investigation and to feedback to the PSEA Network Coordinator on the status of the complaint.
  - ⇒ If the complaint does not provide sufficient information to refer the case (for example, if the affiliation of the alleged perpetrator is unknown), the PSEA Coordinator will convene a small committee of 3-4 PSEA Network members to gather further information.

## Confidentiality

- The PSEA Network will implement appropriate procedures to maintain confidentiality of the data, including password protection of files and strictly limited dissemination.
- **Prior to recording a complaint**, the complainant should be informed of the **mandatory reporting rule** and the PSEA Network's confidentiality policy. Consent should be obtained for the information to be made available to others within the Complaints Management System (the PSEA Network Coordinators, the PSEA Focal Point and the Head of the concerned Agency).
  - ⇒ If a survivor wishes to remain anonymous and does not give consent to follow-up, humanitarian personnel still have **a duty to report** the case, keeping details about the victim anonymous.
  - ⇒ Information about the case is shared strictly on a need-to-know basis in consideration of the wishes and the best interest of the complainant and/or survivor.

## Survivor Assistance

- Given that SEA is a form of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), if the survivor requires and consents to assistance, the PSEA Coordinator immediately refers him/her to the GBV sub-cluster. N.B. Survivor assistance is in **no way** linked to the outcome of the investigation.

### How can you, as a humanitarian, help?

- ⇒ Adhere to your organization's Code of Conduct and the SGB
- ⇒ Report any suspicion of SEA
- ⇒ Inform others how and where to report
- ⇒ Follow your organization's internal SEA procedures, if they exist.

For more information, contact the PSEA Network Coordinators:

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