



## WEBINAR SUMMARY

### Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse: Practical Steps

13 May 2016

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) of affected people by humanitarian workers are one of the most basic failures of accountability to the people whom the humanitarian system is supposed to protect. As the Secretary General of the UN has clearly said: “the trust that people put in us should never be broke by despicable acts of sexual exploitation and abuse. It is our responsibility to protect all those who we serve.” The 2015 IASC statement on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) calls for “reinforcing the responsibilities on PSEA for the Humanitarian Coordinator role to ensure that PSEA has a clear place within the humanitarian architecture”. Besides preventing SEA by humanitarian workers, the aid community also has the responsibility of holding perpetrators to account legally.

#### Panellists

**Ambassador William Lacy Swing**

IASC Champion on PSEA and Director General, International Organization for Migration (IOM)

**Mohamed Fall**

Humanitarian Country Team Focal Point for PSEA and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Representative, Central African Republic



**Ambassador William Lacy Swing**

IASC Champion on PSEA and Director General, International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Leadership by Humanitarian Coordinators are crucial in preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse in the field. It is during operations that this problem occurs and it is there that the responsibility to act is the greatest.

#### Steps for addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

- Establish a prevention of SEA working group with designated focal points from each Humanitarian Country Team member organisation and agency.
- Identify:
  - Survivor assistance service providers
  - Feedback and complaint mechanisms
  - Agencies' SEA reporting procedures
- Set up a coordinated mechanism for assistance to survivors, including inter-agency case management diagram and referral mechanisms for survivors.
- Advocate for a common reporting platform, templates, and standard operating procedures for tracing trends and responding to SEA allegations.

#### Challenges to preventing and addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

- Lack of senior management leadership who are committed to this issue.
- Ad hoc measures in responses to exploitation and abuse cases. Until December 2015, PSEA was not institutionalised within the humanitarian community. This resulted in impunity and inconsistent handling of prevention of and response to SEA.
- Sensitivity and cultural differences challenging the prevention of and response to SEA.



**Jamie Isbister**

Humanitarian Coordinator and First Assistant Secretary, Humanitarian Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia

The handling of PSEA must be coordinated across the humanitarian community and not just within the Humanitarian Country Team. The humanitarian leadership in CAR have recently strengthened measures to prevent and respond to accusations of SEA by reaffirming the zero-tolerance policy, raising awareness amongst humanitarian staff, and holding perpetrators to account.

| Humanitarian PSEA TF  | MINUSCA SEA TF  |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Prevention and engagement with communities</b><br/>Awareness raising within personnel, code of conduct, community awareness raising , community complaint mechanisms pilot (upcoming).</p> <p><b>Response</b><br/>Coordinate victim assistance including relocation, SOPs including an inter-agency case management diagram and a victim referral mechanisms (ongoing), guidelines for victim interviews (children).</p> <p><b>Coordination</b><br/>Inter-agency PSEA focal point networks (68 FP), bi-annual work-plan, capacity building at senior and technical level.</p> | <p><b>Prevention and engagement with communities</b><br/>Patrols, SEA risk assessments in military and police contingents/camps and around IDP camps, military and civil personnel training, communication campaign with communities, compliance with "Off Limit Places", etc.</p> <p><b>Response</b><br/>Enhance case management and referral mechanisms internally and with humanitarians, coordination with national investigators, contribution to victim assistance.</p> <p><b>Coordination</b><br/>Inter-section PSEA focal points in Bangui and Field level (Joint Prevention Teams), capacity building.</p> |
| <p>← <b>Common actions</b> →</p>  |   |
| <p><b>Joint prevention activities, joint missions, Information sharing Protocol (on-going), coordination of victim assistance when force's allegations through technical groups</b></p>   |   |

**Practical steps taken in the Central African Republic to stop Sexual Exploitation and Abuse**

**Strengthened the Humanitarian Coordinator and Humanitarian Country Team leadership**

- Roles and lines of accountabilities for the Humanitarian Coordinator and Humanitarian Country Team members were defined.
- (P)SEA was included as a fixed item on the Humanitarian Country Team agenda and highlighted as an area of priority in the annual plan.
- A PSEA advisor for the Humanitarian Coordinator/Humanitarian Country Team (PSEA Task Force Coordinator) was identified.

**Strengthened coordination mechanism for PSEA**

- A PSEA Task Force(s) (1 focal point per humanitarian organisation) was established to ensure technical coordination.

**Guidance material made available to the Humanitarian Coordinator, Humanitarian Country Team members and humanitarian workers**

- Code of Conduct was signed by all humanitarian workers.
- SoPs, including mapping of assistance and a system of alert, were established.
- Information sharing protocols were drafted to facilitate information sharing between the humanitarian and the peacekeeping mission.

**Actions taken by leadership**

- Support programmes that protect survivors and ensure awareness among affected people.
- Ensure that the Code of Conduct is signed by humanitarian staff.
- Make resources (human and technical) available for the implementation and monitoring of the Humanitarian Country Team PSEA action plan.
- Ensure that media engagement is done in a transparent way.

### **Tips on actions to protect and support survivors in Central African Republic**

- **Medical:** Ensure access to initial medical screening and medical follow up for survivors.
- **Psychosocial:** Provide counselling sessions to survivors. While some impact of SEA are immediately visible physically, the most devastating consequences concern the mental and social aspect of the crime.
- **Reintegration:** Support the integration of survivors into their communities. SEA may lead to social exclusion. Survivors may be stigmatised and rejected by their communities.
- **Support during interviews and investigation process:** Ensure support and assistance to survivors during the investigation, as they often come from vulnerable backgrounds and are susceptible to intimidation.
- **Protection/relocation:** When needed for safety reasons, offer the option of relocation for the survivors, especially those who bear witness in legal cases. Remember that stigmatisation and over-exposure of a case of SEA in media may lead to risk of further marginalisation for survivors.
- **Legal:** Ensure support to the legal processes (besides holding perpetrators to account) to survivors as required. For example, SEA sometimes results in pregnancies, which often is an added burden to the survivor.

#### **P2P Support Webinar Summary – Protection of Civilians**

This summary is a combination of presentations from the webinar and broader learning from the P2P Support team. To listen to the full webinar and to access recordings of past webinars, visit the website: <http://www.deliveraidbetter.org/>