FACTSHEET

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) in Syria

January – June 2025

27,888

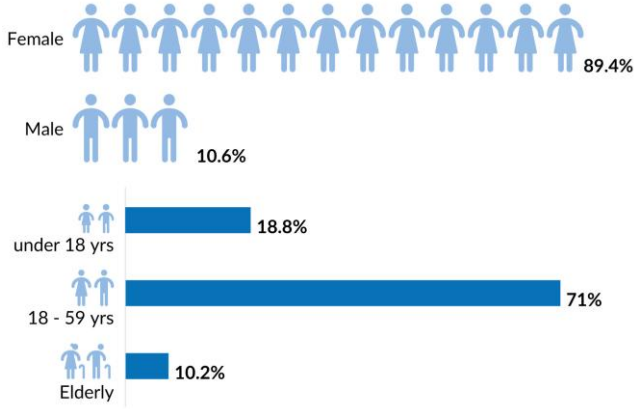
persons included in PSEA activities

7,666

individuals benefited from PSEA awareness-raising sessions and PSEA capacity-building activities

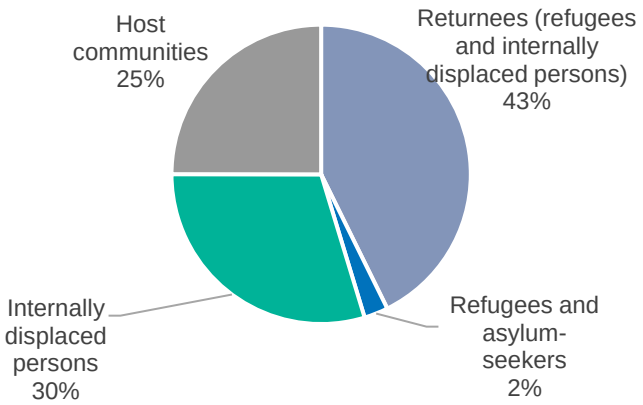
Population by Age & Gender

benefiting from PSEA Awareness raising sessions

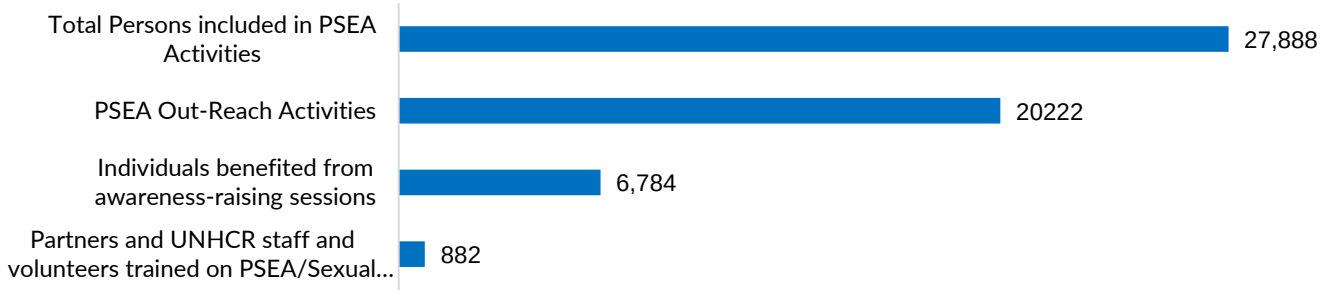


Population groups

benefiting from PSEA awareness raising sessions



14 Governorates | 69 Community Centres | 15 Partners



January-June 2025

Introduction

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) by aid workers is a violation of core humanitarian principles and is strictly prohibited. SEA not only inflicts serious harm on those we are mandated to protect but also jeopardizes the credibility of all humanitarian organizations. Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) policies and practices aim to reduce the risk of, prevent and respond to SEA by UN personnel, NGO partners, and other entities and persons involved in providing humanitarian assistance, including contractors, community volunteers and workers. UNHCR continuously works to ensure that allegations of SEA are reported and responded to in a timely and appropriate manner, and that victims of SEA are referred to support and assistance needed in line with a victim-centred approach.

Awareness-raising

UNHCR and its partners have a ZERO TOLERANCE policy for all sexual misconduct, including SEA of people affected by crisis. In the first half of 2025, UNHCR Syria conducted the following activities to raise awareness on PSEA:

- **PSEA Awareness Sessions**: These sessions were held continuously, addressing people with and for whom UNHCR works, in all UNHCR-supported community centres. Sessions focus on sensitizing to what sexual misconduct is, key principles and reporting mechanisms.
- **PSEA Flash Messages**: The Representative of UNHCR Syria sent periodic flash messages to all UNHCR staff, reinforcing the importance of PSEA and the need for collective responsibility.
- **PSEA Key Messages:** SEA key messages, in both Arabic and English, were developed and are being disseminated to people with and for whom UNHCR works.

Capacity Building

UNHCR Syria took the below initiatives to train and equip staff, partners, and other stakeholders in PSEA and to take specific actions to prevent SEA.

- **PSEA Partner Capacity Assessment**: UNHCR continues to follow up closely with partners who need to improve their PSEA capacity. The process of PSEA partner capacity assessment is carried out periodically to continue ensuring partners maintain at high PSEA capacity.
- **Refresher Sessions and Trainings:** Regular refresher sessions for all UNHCR staff as well as PSEA trainings for partner staff, volunteers, and community structures were conducted to ensure that personnel are well-informed and trained in PSEA principles.
- **PSEA-specific field missions:** Specialist staff were deployed regularly to all field locations, including camps, collective shelters, and urban sites, to gather first-hand information and data on the prevalence of SEA and carry out intensive awareness raising among UNHCR staff and partners.

Other activities

- The **Syria PSEA Network for the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA Network)** operates under the auspices of the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator, with UNRWA, IMC and UNHCR representatives co-chairing to ensure accountability, prevention, and response to the risks of SEA, and protect the vulnerable populations from such violations during the delivery of humanitarian responses. In its capacity as co-chairs, UNHCR along with IMC and UNRWA organized and led PSEA monthly In-Country Network (ICN) meetings on a regular basis to follow up and discuss SEA concerns with other UN agencies. In addition, UNHCR contributed significantly to ensuring a smooth transition and integration of the coordination structures in both north-west and north-east Syria. This was achieved through active, high-level coordination with various stakeholders, aimed at establishing cohesive, well-informed, and effective inter-agency collaboration.
- UNHCR, in its capacity as co-chair of the PSEA Network at both national and sub-national levels in north-east Syria, has been actively contributing to the **roll-out of the Inter-Agency Risk Assessment (IARA)** on SEA, funded by WHO under the umbrella of the PSEA Network. As part of this assessment, UNHCR supported the network in organizing and leading focus group discussions with community members and partner staff. Additional data collection methods included key informant interviews with PSEA focal points, coordinators/co-chairs, as well as surveys targeting both sector coordinators and PSEA focal points. The PSEA Network will analyze the collected data and present the findings in the third quarter of 2025.
- **SEA Case Reporting**: A system for tracking and reporting SEA cases is in place and is being regularly updated.
- **Complaint and Referral Mechanisms:** A dedicated UNHCR PSEA hotline and an email for reporting and addressing PSEA concerns are in place, along with complaint boxes placed in all community centres as well as UNHCR offices.