

Terms of Reference
GBV Sub-Sector Working Group
Poland

I. Background

Since the onset of military hostilities in neighboring Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the world has witnessed the world's fastest growing refugee crisis since World War II¹, with Poland receiving a significant proportion of newly-arriving refugees within the region. As of 17 March, over 2.323 million refugees have arrived from Ukraine to Poland. Nearly all arrivals are women, children, and older persons, as men aged 18-60 are required by Ukraine authorities to remain in Ukraine. It is expected that overall flows will continue. Daily arrivals varying based on dynamics in Ukraine.

The overwhelming majority of refugees are women and children, often separated from husbands and fathers who remained in Ukraine, and elderly people (including unaccompanied elderly people). High levels of trauma associated with conflict and family separation are exacerbated by protection risks facing new arrivals which are inordinately high. The government of the Republic of Poland, civil society and the host community have displayed an overwhelming level of support during this mass influx. Nevertheless, the lack of registration of new arrivals and onward movements, vetting of volunteers, and basic services, have heightened GBV risks. Disclosures of GBV incidents which have occurred in Ukraine (country of origin), during flight and in Poland (country of asylum), are received by multiple humanitarian actors. Existing mechanisms for safe referrals and GBV response services have been disrupted and/or close to a breaking point in some locations. Traditional GBV service providers within the local civil society are overstretched but trying to rapidly scale up staffing. In light of the foregoing, the prevention, risk mitigation of and response to gender-based violence (GBV), violence, abuse, neglect and/or the exploitation of children, require an immediate, well-coordinated and protection-oriented response building upon existing systems.

The GBV Sub-Sector Working Group (GBV SWG) was established within the aegis of the Protection Sector in the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)-led Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF) on 7 March 2022.

II. Objective

The GBV Sub-Sector Working Group (GBV SWG) is a coordination body with the objective to strengthen GBV prevention, risk mitigation and response in emergency settings and works to facilitate multi-sectoral interagency action. It aims to ensure coherent, coordinated and effective GBV prevention, risk mitigation and response approaches through the mobilization of relevant government agencies, international organizations, UN Agencies, national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society networks, national refugee-led organizations, refugee women-led organizations. The GBV SWG will deliver on the 6 core functions of GBV Coordination: support service delivery, inform high-level humanitarian decision-making, plan and implement sub-sector strategies, monitor and evaluate performance, build national capacity in preparedness and contingency planning and support robust advocacy.

¹ <https://www.unhcr.org/refugeebrief/latest-issues/>

The GBV SWG develops and implements the GBV strategy within the broader protection strategy and ensures integration of GBV into the Refugee Response Plan (RRP). The aim of the coordination is to identify and close gaps, increase predictability and consolidate capacities of actors. The GBV SWG ensures services are in place for multi-sectoral GBV response, GBV prevention strengthened and advocates for and supports the integration of GBV risk mitigation strategies in other sectors in line with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) GBV Guidelines. The GBV SWG coordinates with national coordination bodies and structures. It also ensures a coordinated approach with field level coordination mechanisms where applicable. The GBV SWG focuses on refugees from Ukraine in Poland.

III. Guiding Principles and Approaches

The members of the GBV SWG are guided by the Protection Principles.² The GBV guiding principles for GBV coordination and programming are: safety, respect, confidentiality and non-discrimination. Application of these principles at all times is mandatory. They serve as the foundation for all humanitarian actors when coordinating and implementing GBV-related programming. Programming and coordination adheres to the human rights-based and community-based approaches. Everyone directly or indirectly engaged with survivors must ensure a survivor-centred approach, and the following guiding principles³:

- Respect by treating survivors with dignity, ensuring their participation, and respecting their decisions
- Confidentiality by respecting survivors' right to privacy and ensuring that any information about them should only be shared with their informed consent, and in line with data protection principles
- Safety of the survivor and others, such as her/his children and people who have assisted her/him, being of primary concern at all times
- Non-discrimination by treating everyone based on their needs alone.

IV. Core Functions⁴

Responsibilities of GBV SWG members include but are not limited to:

a. Coordination platform, assessment, decision and planning processes

- Provide a platform for sharing information, coordination and support on activities, gaps and immediate needs
- Coordinate GBV activities and act as advisory body for all newly initiated and ongoing GBV activities to ensure complementary programming and avoid duplication
- Conduct specific GBV needs assessments and gap analysis to inform priorities and identify gaps, including in service delivery, engage in field missions and ensure inclusion of GBV considerations in planning and implementation of interagency assessments
- Liaise with relevant working groups and other relevant bodies to ensure that GBV issues are integrated into the emergency response efforts, including refugee response plans, strategies, and appeals
- Inform higher level decision making in line with the RCM and contribute to planning processes such as the RRP

b. Prevention and response

² Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response

³ GBV Minimum Standards, supra note 15, pp. xi; 2-9

⁴ At the onset of an emergency, TORs may focus on urgent responsibilities and can be reviewed after 6 months

- Conduct and regularly update a service mapping and relevant actors engaged in GBV response
- Establish and update GBV Standard Operating Procedures and referral pathways
- Advocate for safe and ethical collection, management and dissemination of case management data according to global GBV information management standards, including establishing Information-Sharing protocols (ISPs)
- Support partners to ensure safe and ethical referral and case management systems are in place to enable survivors to access services that address their physical, emotional, psychological, social, legal and protection needs
- Strengthen the technical capacity of service providers and community-based structures in safe and ethical referral and GBV response
- Develop communication materials to facilitate access
- Coordinate awareness-raising and information sharing activities on GBV
- Promote and coordinate GBV prevention activities
- Support monitoring and evaluation frameworks for the GBV prevention and response (including SWs reporting)

c. Capacity Development and Technical Guidance

- Ensure that applicable inter-agency GBViE minimum standards are applied
- Assist in providing and creating relevant tools
- Provide technical support, guidance and training (including to national authorities, NGOs, local organizations as well as other sectors on risk mitigation)
- Coordinate and support training, capacity building, and technical support with regards to prevention and response to GBV

d. Advocacy

- Collect and raise GBV issues and trends regularly to inform the GBV sub-sector's advocacy strategy
- Advocate for designated funding for prevention and response to GBV.
- Develop and disseminate key advocacy messages on GBV response and risk mitigation in the refugee response crisis
- Coordinate the planning of joint advocacy activities
- Deliver systematic leadership on GBV in strategic decision-making and advocacy fora at all levels by coordinating with a wide range of partners including donors and government counterparts, to ensure that GBV services are recognized as life-saving and prioritized in funding decisions and response planning

V. GBV Sub-Working Group Structure

a. Leadership Arrangement

The National GBV SWG will have a co-leadership structure of UNHCR and a local NGO, women-led organization or refugee-led group. UNHCR as global lead on coordination in refugee setting is responsible for supporting the GBV SWG in line with the refugee coordination model. A co-chair will be elected from amongst members of the GBV SWG on a six months rotational basis.

Due to the exigencies of the immediate emergency response, the first co-chair of the GBV SWG was nominated by the Polish NGO Humanitarian Forum in mid-March 2022. The nomination of Centrum

Praw Kobiet (Women's Rights Centre) was presented to the GBV SWG and endorsed by members without any objections on 22 March 2022.

The co-chairs will oversee the development, endorsement and implementation of the GBV Work Plan, ensure close and effective collaboration with other working groups and represent the group and the Protection Sector.

b. Secretariat

The co-chairs will jointly serve as secretariat for the GBV SWG. The co-chairs will agree on a division of labor in providing secretarial support and in implementation of coordination work of the GBV SWG. Both UNHCR and the co-chair will appoint/designate staff to undertake or support the coordination structure. The secretariat will follow up on decisions of the GBV SWG as well as coordinate and implement and report on the Annual Work Plan.

c. Membership

Membership is only recognized for each organization that has formally expressed interest to join the GBV SWG and follows GBV guiding principles. Membership is open to all organizations working on prevention, risk mitigation of, and response to GBV. National NGOs and local organizations, including and in particular those led by women and refugees, are particularly encouraged to participate and contribute to the effective functioning of the GBV SWG. Member organizations should identify primary and alternate focal points who will regularly attend the GBV WG meetings.

VI. Arrangements for meetings

The GBV Sub-Sector will meet every other Tuesday at 10:00 to 11:00 with an on-line/in presence hybrid modality. "Ad hoc" meetings may be called by the Co-Chairs, or at the request of other members of the GBV SWG, when this is considered necessary to address urgent issues.

A draft agenda will be circulated to members at least one day initially before the regular meeting, giving the members the opportunity to suggest additional agenda items.

Draft minutes of meetings will be circulated and uploaded to the portal before the next meeting.

VII. Amendments

This TOR is a working document and may be altered to meet emerging needs of all members by agreement of the majority of the members. However, it is recommended to be reviewed every six months.

For further information regarding the GBV Sub-Sector Working Group please contact:

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