



Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

Terms of Reference, 2023¹

(English version)

Background

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) is a critical priority of the refugee response, requiring dedicated and coordinated action across all programmatic areas, from the outset of the emergency. The risks of SEA may be particularly high in the Ukraine refugee response, where women and children comprise the majority of persons in need of protection and humanitarian assistance. These risks may be further compounded by the overall volatility of the crisis, a lack of awareness amongst refugees regarding their rights and the services available to them, and the large and diverse nature of the actors working in the response, including many volunteers.

Task Force Responsibilities

Under the auspices of the Refugee Coordination Forum, the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Task Force (hereafter: PSEA Task Force) is the primary body for technical-level coordination and oversight of PSEA activities in Slovakia.

The PSEA Task Force is responsible for implementing coordinated activities among member organizations to: (a) minimize the risk of SEA by aid workers and other individuals and entities involved in the refugee response; (b) ensure effective response when SEA allegations do arise; and (c) raise awareness of PSEA in Slovakia. The PSEA Task Force activities follow a victim-centered approach and respect the principles of safety, confidentiality, respect, and non-discrimination.

The presence of the PSEA Task Force does not lessen the responsibility of individual Task Force member organizations to develop, implement, and strengthen internal PSEA programs at the country level: senior management within each member organization remains accountable for PSEA within their organizations.²

The PSEA Task Force is not responsible for investigating or adjudicating complaints: these functions rest exclusively with the entity that employs the individual against whom a complaint has been alleged, in line with internal policy and procedure.

Task Force Roles

The PSEA Task Force in Slovakia is co-chaired by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights (SNCHR).

The Co-Chairs of the PSEA Task Force play an active role at the Task Force level in convening and managing meetings and events, and help coordinate and oversee the PSEA Task Force Action Plan. The

¹ September 2023 update

² *Secretary General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13)* available [here](#).



Co-Chairs also lead thematic areas or objectives in the PSEA Action Plan where they have particular capacity or expertise.

The PSEA Coordinator, whose role is covered by UNHCR, supports and represents the PSEA Task Force in the fulfillment of its responsibilities under these TORs and the Task Force Action Plan. The PSEA Coordinator is responsible for reporting on Task Force activities, on progress against PSEA Task Force Action Plan indicators, and on anonymized SEA trends to the Refugee Coordination Forum. The PSEA Coordinator represents the Task Force in relevant coordination bodies and advises actors in country on good practices to support effective PSEA implementation.

Each member organization is represented in the Task Force by one PSEA Focal Point.³ All Focal Points shall actively participate in information sharing on internal PSEA initiatives and in the coordination of activities under the Action Plan, and are responsible for technical support and coordination on PSEA within their organization under the leadership of their senior management.

The Task Force may form smaller, time-bound teams of regular members to carry out specific deliverables as needed.

Membership

PSEA Task Force membership is open to all national NGOs, international NGOs and UN agencies operating in Slovakia. Membership to the Task Force is also open to other sectors' coordinators, who are encouraged to attend PSEA Task Force meetings in order to improve two-way information-sharing and coordination. In particular, the Co-Chairs of the PSEA Task Force, the Protection and Inclusion Working Group, as well as the Task Force on Trafficking in Persons, should participate in each other's meetings and events, and actively engage to ensure close linkages between respective interventions in Slovakia.

The PSEA Task Force will engage in outreach with non-member organizations as part of ongoing activities. At a minimum, all humanitarian organizations in Slovakia should be aware of the inter-agency SEA Standard Operating Procedures for processing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse complaints, to be established in 2023, and be able to receive SEA complaints against their own staff, regardless of their relationship to the PSEA Task Force.

Meetings

The PSEA Task Force convenes quarterly, on the last Friday of the quarter. Additional ad-hoc meetings may be requested by any member. The notes of each meeting are stored in the Sharepoint folder available to the PSEA Task Force members ([here](#)). To provide a supporting environment to discuss potentially sensitive challenges in PSEA, any information shared during meetings will be kept confidential on request, following a victim-centered approach. As a general matter, Task Force meetings should refrain from discussing individual cases; any reference to SEA allegations or cases during meetings will be anonymized.

In the event that a PSEA Focal Point cannot attend a regularly scheduled Task Force meeting, the member organization will be represented by a dedicated and sufficiently briefed alternate.

³ See the *Generic Terms of Reference for In-Country PSEA Focal Points* (2021) [here](#)



Tasks

Under the four pillars of the IASC Minimum Operating Standards on PSEA,⁴ the PSEA Task Force will undertake the following:

Management and Coordination

- Establish and implement a measurable PSEA Task Force Action Plan for 2023, with defined time frames and responsibilities of Task Force members based on specialty and capacity.
- Coordinate the PSEA activities of Task Force members to avoid duplication and fill gaps.
- Work closely with other coordination bodies in Slovakia in the area of Protection and Inclusion (including Child Protection and Gender Based Violence) as well as Trafficking in Persons, to support prevention and response to SEA.
- Identify training needs and resources to coordinate capacity building for all PSEA Focal Points and senior management on their specific roles and responsibilities in relation to PSEA.
- Advocate for the strengthening and/or establishment of internal PSEA policies and practices for all organizations operating in the refugee response in Slovakia, and offer support to organizations as needed where such systems are not in place, regardless of whether they are members of the PSEA Task Force.

Engagement with and support for the affected population

- Raise awareness about the rights of affected people, what SEA is, what constitutes inappropriate behavior of aid workers, the fact that aid workers are obliged to report SEA incidents that they are aware of, and the various methods to submit complaints and how to access victim assistance services in Slovakia.
- Support members to assess and improve the effectiveness and appropriateness of PSEA activities within the targeted communities.
- With the particular engagement of women and girls, and individuals with specific needs among the affected population, support members to create and/or adapt their aid delivery models to address power disparities and actively give those in more vulnerable positions a sustained voice in how aid is delivered.
- All engagement with populations should be done in coordination with actors working with affected populations and in coordination with the Protection and Inclusion Working Group, to avoid duplication of efforts and to inform community engagement.

Prevention

- Advocate for PSEA to be a priority throughout programming, and support actors working in different operational areas to embed SEA risk mitigation in needs assessment, project design, implementation, and monitoring based on identified SEA trends.
- Supplement PSEA Task Force members' internal initiatives to strengthen SEA prevention through joint activities and the sharing of good practices.
- Encourage PSEA Task Force members to carry out induction and refresher trainings on PSEA for all personnel, and support such trainings with jointly developed contextualized materials.
- Ensure that PSEA remains as a core objective in the Slovakia Refugee Response Plan.

⁴ The four Pillars of Management and Coordination, Community Engagement, Prevention, and Response are outlined in the Minimum Operating Standards for PSEA, [here](#)



Response

- Jointly map trusted and functional complaint and feedback mechanisms (CFMs) in Slovakia, to identify where there are gaps in the affected population's safe access to report SEA.
- Support members to establish new complaint channels to fill the gaps in access to reporting based on the mapping and informed by community preferences, so that there are safe, accessible, and contextually appropriate channels for any member of the community to report sensitive allegations.
- Establish an agreed Standard Operating Procedures on inter-agency complaint and assistance referral, in line with the Global Standard Operating Procedures, which build upon inter-agency community-based complaint mechanism (CBCM)⁵ and incorporate vetted Gender Based Violence⁶ and Child Protection referral pathways. The PSEA Task Force shall not create parallel assistance referral pathways for survivors of SEA.
- Raise the awareness of all personnel of available complaint channels, so that all personnel who may work with SEA survivors or receive a SEA report will know how to recognize SEA and where to safely send allegations.
- Raise awareness on the inter-agency reporting and referral mechanism among all actors in Slovakia.

These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed on an annual basis and revised as appropriate.

⁵ See the *IASC Global Standard Operating Procedures on Inter-Agency Cooperation in Community-Based Complaints Mechanisms* (2016), available [here](#)

⁶ See *Gender Based Violence (GBV) referral pathways for Slovakia*, available [here](#)