FACTSHEET

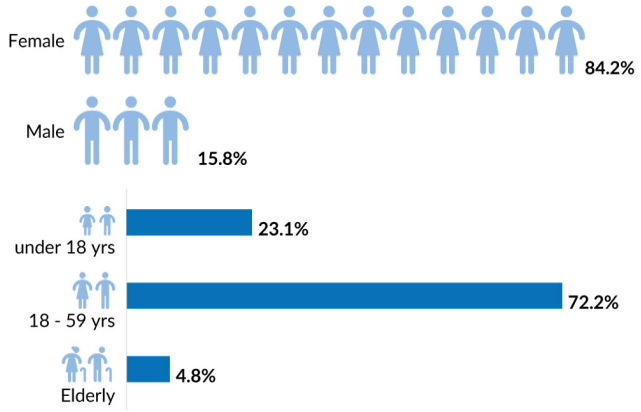
Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) in Syria

January – December 2024

85,211
Individuals benefited from PSEA awareness-raising sessions

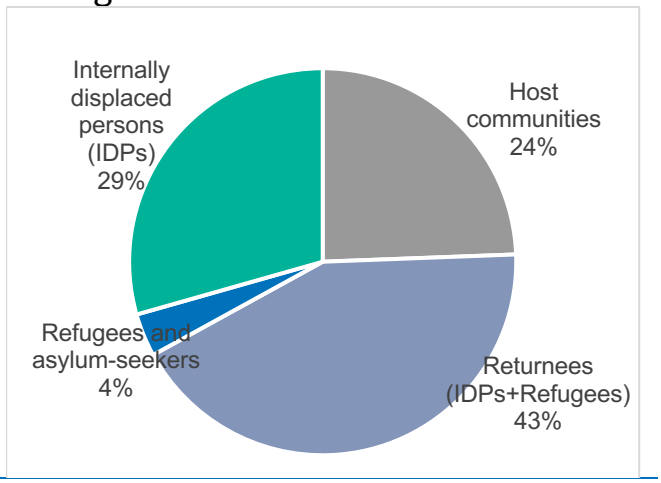
4,576
Partner staff and volunteers trained on PSEA

89,787 persons included in PSEA awareness sessions and capacity building activities

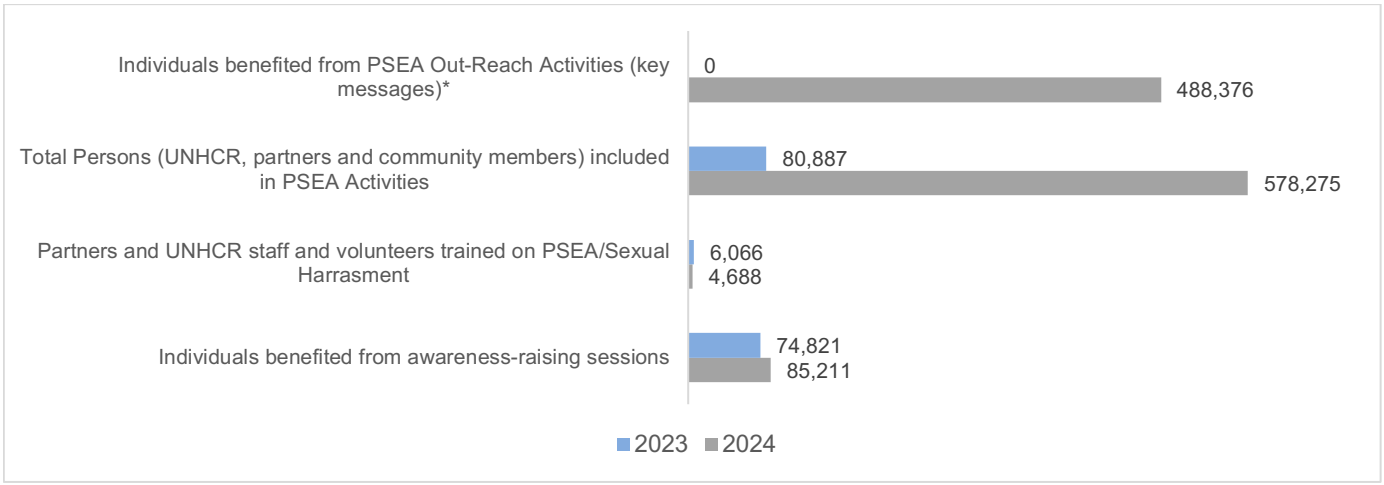


Population groups

benefiting from PSEA Awareness raising sessions



14 Governorates | 113 Community Centres | 26 Partners



** Note: Key messages indicator was added to Activiti info in 2024.*

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 the UN is 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 2024, UNHCR Syria conducted the following activities to raise awareness on PSEA:

- **PSEA Awareness Sessions**: These sessions were held continuously, targeting 85,211 people with and for whom UNHCR works, in all UNHCR-supported community centres. Around 4,300 sessions were conducted focusing on sensitizing what sexual misconduct is, key principles and reporting mechanisms.
- **PSEA Flash Messages**: The Representative of UNHCR Syria sends monthly 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 disseminated to 488, 376 people with and for whom UNHCR works.

Capacity Building

UNHCR Syria took the below initiatives to train and equip all 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:** Dedicated PSEA staff was 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 In-Country Network for the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA ICN)** operates under the auspices of the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator. In 2024, a PSEA National Coordinator was appointed. Throughout the year, UNHCR and UNICEF co-chaired the network to ensure accountability, prevention, and response to the risks of (SEA), as well as protecting vulnerable populations during humanitarian interventions. As co-chairs, UNHCR, the PSEA Coordinator, and UNICEF organized monthly PSEA ICN meetings to monitor and address SEA concerns in collaboration with other UN agencies. Additionally, they facilitated a workshop to develop and discuss the 2025 action plan, with the participation from international NGOs, national NGOs, and UN agencies at the national level.
- The Sub-national PSEA ICN in Aleppo finalized the roll-out of the **Inter-Agency Risk Assessment (IARA) on SEA**. As part of the assessment, PSEA ICN members and their partners conducted Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with communities, engaging more than 500 individuals. Other forms of data collection included key informant interviews with heads of offices, FGD with PSEA focal points, survey for sector coordinators and for PSEA focal points.
- **Emergency Response:** In addition to regular PSEA activities, the PSEA team at both the national and field levels carried out prevention efforts during various emergencies in 2024. This included disseminating key PSEA messages at border points, collective shelters, hosting centers, and community centers. Additionally, short training sessions were conducted for frontline workers to enhance their capacity in preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse.
- **SEA Case Reporting**: A system for tracking and reporting SEA cases was established by UNHCR.
- **Complaint and Referral Mechanisms:** A dedicated UNHCR PSEA hotline and an email for reporting and addressing PSEA concerns were established, along with complaint boxes placed in all community centres as well as UNHCR offices.