

# COMBATTING SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

Highlights of Proposals and Initiatives set out in A/70/729: Strengthening measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse

## PROMOTING TRANSPARENCY

- **Para 39/40:** Following consultations with troop and police-contributing countries, the information on allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse has been expanded in A/70/729. Country-specific information in connection with allegations of sexual exploitation and will be regularly updated and made available on the Conduct and Discipline Unit website (<https://cdu.unlb.org>).
- **Para 40:** The Secretary-General will, in future reports, include country-specific information on outstanding allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, including referrals for criminal accountability and those reported prior to 2015.

## MEASURES TO PREVENT SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

- **Para 41:** A Secretariat-wide communications and public information strategy was developed in 2015 to support efforts to eliminate sexual exploitation and abuse. The Secretary-General encourages agencies, funds and programmes to incorporate relevant elements into their communication strategies, where not already covered.
- **Para 42:** The sexual exploitation and abuse e-learning programme is being finalized and will be piloted by second quarter 2016. It will be mandatory for all field mission personnel, to be expanded to all Secretariat personnel.
- **Para 43:** Pre-deployment training support to troop and police contributing countries is being expanded, including through a planned increase in mobile training teams and updated Core Pre-deployment Training Materials.
- **Para 44:** After developing new technical means, large numbers of uniformed personnel will be vetted for history of prior misconduct while serving with United Nations peacekeeping starting in the first quarter of 2016.
- **Para 45:** Troop-contributing countries are requested to certify that personnel have not engaged in prior misconduct while in the service of United Nations peacekeeping, as part of operational readiness certification. Certified personnel who engaged in previous misconduct will be repatriated at the expense of the Member State.
- **Para 46:** In 2015, the Department of Field Support Misconduct Tracking System was enhanced to support the expanded certification and vetting efforts, and new mechanisms were developed to allow for more precise reporting.

## MEASURES TO ENFORCE ACCOUNTABILITY

### ENHANCING COMPLAINT RECEPTION MECHANISMS

- **Para 47:** The Department of Field Support will continue to monitor progress on the community-based model complaint reception mechanism issued to field missions in 2015 to encourage complainants to come forward.

### STRENGTHENING INVESTIGATIONS

- **Para 48:** All peacekeeping missions have established standing task forces on sexual exploitation and abuse and have put in place focal points in this area.
- **Para 49:** The Secretariat continues to build the capacity of Immediate Response Teams through guidance and training.
- **Para 50:** Member States are requested to adopt a six-month timeline, as done by United Nations investigative entities in 2015, as the standard for completing investigations into alleged sexual exploitation and abuse.
- **Para 51:** The six-month timeframe for United Nations-led investigations into alleged sexual exploitation and abuse will be shortened to three months when the circumstances suggest the need for greater urgency.
- **Para 52:** The Office of Internal Oversight Services will develop uniform standards of investigation.
- **Para 53:** In situations of heightened risk, Member States are urged to comply with expedited timelines by appointing a national investigation officer within five working days and completing investigations within three months.



- **Para 54:** The Secretariat has finalized amendments to its procedures and personnel qualifications for new deployments to reflect the requirement that troop-contributing countries include national investigation officers within deployments as a means to expedite investigations.
- **Para 55:** Member States are requested to expand the scope of action open to the United Nations regarding alleged sexual exploitation and abuse by contingent members by allowing the Office of Internal Oversight Services and/or an Immediate Response Team to interview witnesses, including contingent members.
- **Para 56:** Member States are encouraged to enter into bilateral agreements with the Office of Internal Oversight Services authorizing that Office to investigate alleged sexual exploitation and abuse by contingent members.

## MONITORING PROGRESS FOLLOWING REPORTS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

- **Para 57:** The Secretariat has developed a case-reporting reference guide to assist Member States in meeting their obligation to provide the Secretary-General with regular progress updates on misconduct investigations.
- **Para 58:** As part of robust measures to follow up with Member States, the senior leadership of the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support are systematically communicating with Member States and holding meetings with capitals and permanent missions, particularly in very serious cases.
- **Para 59:** The Secretary-General refers cases involving allegations of criminal conduct by United Nations officials and experts on mission to States of nationality, and the Office of Legal Affairs continues to follow up with Member States on the status of their efforts to investigate and prosecute these crimes.

## PROMOTING MANAGERIAL, COMMAND AND INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

- **Para 60:** The Secretary-General monitors command and control and has taken action up to repatriation of contingent commanders, contingents or termination of the deployment of uniformed personnel where prima facie evidence exists of widespread or systemic violations of the prohibition against sexual exploitation and abuse.
- **Para 61:** The General Assembly will consider proposed changes to the Staff Rules, and related Administrative Instruction, reflecting greater financial accountability for United Nations staff members.
- **Para 62:** Where an allegation of sexual exploitation and abuse is substantiated, any payments related to individuals that were suspended or are outstanding, will not be paid from the date of the incidents, and any payments already made will be charged against future payments to the Member State.
- **Para 63:** Member States are asked to agree that, where an investigation is not completed within one year of the date of notification, payment in relation to the unit with which the implicated individual was deployed, or a corresponding replacement unit, will be suspended; following consultations with Member States, all further deployments will be suspended until notification of completion of the investigation is provided.
- **Para 64:** The Secretary-General is developing guidance on referring possible criminal conduct to United Nations Headquarters and the judicial authorities of Host States, or the State of nationality of the alleged perpetrator.
- **Para 65-66:** Member States are urged to finalize their deliberations on ensuring the accountability of United Nations staff and experts on mission with respect to criminal acts committed in peacekeeping operations.
- **Para 66:** Member States are requested to assess existing national legislation to determine applicability to sex crimes committed by nationals while in the service of United Nations peace operations, and if necessary, assess whether new legislative action is required, including allowing nationality-based extraterritorial jurisdiction.
- **Para 67:** The Secretary-General will seek information from Member States on how their legislation complies with the request to amend their administrative frameworks governing police and military contingents to explicitly include sexual exploitation and abuse as a type of misconduct and to ensure that such cases attract the harshest available sanctions, and will seek agreement to include this information in future reports.
- **Para 68:** Member States are requested to agree to establish on-site court martial proceedings, supported by the necessary judicial infrastructure, when allegations amount to sex crimes under national legislation.



- **Para 69:** Member States are asked to agree to obtain DNA samples of members of their uniformed personnel who are alleged to have committed sexual exploitation and abuse.

## STRENGTHENED MANAGEMENT OF THE RISK OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

- **Para 70-72:** The risk assessment tool for peace operations will be applied to identify missions considered to be at increased risk of sexual exploitation and abuse, for which heightened risk mitigation measures will be mandatory.
- **Para 71:** Efforts are underway to increase the representation of women among uniformed personnel in peacekeeping.
- **Para 73:** The Secretariat is exploring how technology solutions may be used to support risk assessment and mitigation.
- **Para 74:** Missions with military personnel will ensure that there is an inspection and compliance function evaluating risks, recommending mitigation measures and monitoring compliance related to sexual exploitation and abuse.
- **Para 76-77:** The Secretary-General is establishing a trust fund for services to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse; in the absence of immediately-available means, timely victim support will be provided through mission budgets. Member States are requested to contribute to the trust fund on a voluntary basis and to agree to transfer payments withheld for substantiated sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel to the trust fund for victims.
- **Para 78:** Member States are urged to receive claims from victims and consider the required mechanisms for doing so.
- **Para 79:** In 2015, an interim victim assistance programme was put in place for field missions to provide greater guidance on referrals of victims to service providers, monitoring support and enhancing assistance for paternity claims.
- **Para 80:** Troop and police contributing countries are requested to appoint paternity focal points to facilitate claims.
- **Para 81:** The High-Level Committee on Management established a Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, which is considering how to advance the proposals in A/69/779 involving the United Nations system globally.
- **Para 82:** The Secretary-General intends to reflect expectations of accountability measures in cooperation agreements with the African Union as part of efforts to institutionalize the United Nations-African Union partnership.