



Statement of the Staff Federations of the United Nations Common System on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

The three staff federations of the United Nations common system, collectively representing 120,000 staff across the globe, hereby set out our position on incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by civilian and military personnel operating for the United Nations and specialized agencies.

Together we believe that even one substantiated case of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN civilian (staff and contractors) and military personnel is one case too many. Each case of exploitation and abuse results in a life destroyed, a victim created, a family torn apart.

The organizations for which our staff work were created to promote peace and welfare for all humankind. We have no tolerance for personnel who abuse and exploit those who seek our protection. Their acts are a stain on the UN flag.

The staff we represent strive to rebuild communities torn apart by conflict and disaster. This involves relationships of trust with those we serve. Sexual exploitation and abuse by a few UN civilian and military personnel breaks this trust, undoes our hard work, and puts our staff and operations at risk.

We therefore call for an end to sexual exploitation and abuse by civilian and military personnel and call on all staff to report colleagues or military personnel who commit such acts.

We also call on our organizations to put in place easily accessible, confidential and credible reporting mechanisms for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse and for staff who report such acts. We further ask that staff who report such acts be better shielded from all forms of retaliation through robust and independent whistleblower policies.

We request a single, comprehensive, prompt and fair procedure to investigate claims both against UN staff and military personnel. All those who operate under the UN flag should be subject to the same investigative rules and procedures, and provided the same due process.

We ask that zero tolerance mean just that, including for senior staff or military leaders in missions or at headquarters who turn a blind eye to or seek to cover up or divert attention from acts committed under their supervision or command.

We call for a culture change at UN headquarters so that military forces with a record of sexual exploitation and abuse are no longer contracted for peacekeeping missions on the grounds of expediency.

We also support efforts to provide appropriate training to staff and military personnel deployed to the field.

Together we believe that individual staff and military personnel who commit acts of sexual abuse and exploitation, or who attempt to cover it up, should be accountable for their acts, including in appropriate judicial systems. But senior managers and military commanders, as well as our organizations and their governing bodies, such as the UN General Assembly, also have an important role to play in ending this scourge.

We as staff federations are determined to stamp out acts of sexual exploitation and abuse by civilian and military personnel in UN operations. To this end we invite organizations and member states to join us in supporting this goal.