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PROTECTION FROM
SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE
AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT
2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (PSEAH) is among the highest priorities for the International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations (UN) Migration Agency.

IOM actively works to prevent, respond to, and provide protection from sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment globally, across its regional and country offices, within programming, and as part of collective PSEAH efforts.

In 2023, IOM welcomed its first ever **IOM External Evaluation on PSEAH** findings and recommendations. The objectives of the External Evaluation were three-fold: i) Review IOM's progress since 2016, when the first IOM Policy on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) was launched, best practices, gaps, and opportunities; ii) identify key recommendations; and iii) enhance IOM's risk management approach. Of the 62 recommendations outlined in the report, 46 were accepted, 14 were partially accepted, and two (2) were not accepted. Amongst other recommendations, the External Evaluation highlighted the need for dedicated, flexible, and long-term funding to support institutional PSEAH action across IOM. Read more about the IOM External Evaluation here.

Full External Evaluation Report: [1 - External Evaluation Report \(PSEAH\)](#)
Management Response: [2 - External Evaluation Management Response \(PSEAH\)](#)
Summary Brief (2 pages): [3 - External Evaluation Briefing Note \(PSEAH\)](#)

Throughout 2023, IOM responded to seven (7) concurrent L2 / L3 crises in Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Somalia, Sudan, Türkiye and Ukraine and its neighboring countries.

We invite you to read more about PSEAH in IOM!

Dyane Epstein,
Senior Coordinator for PSEAH, IOM HQ



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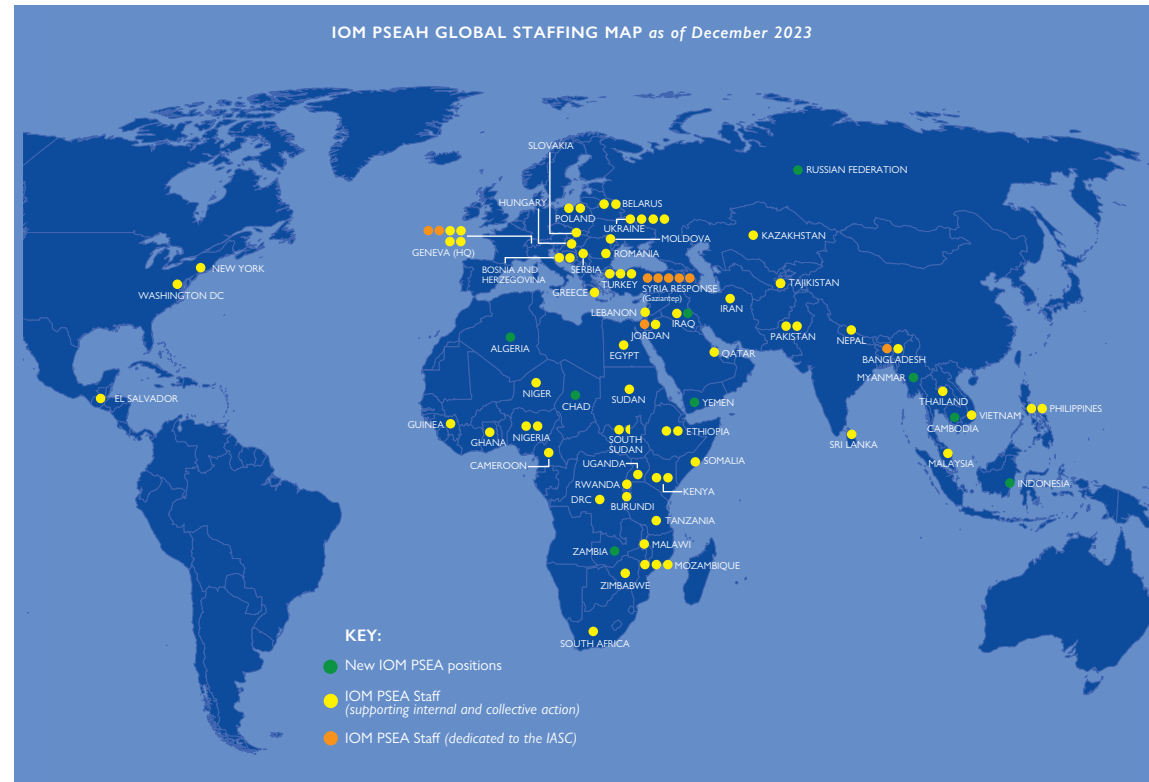




PILLAR 1:

Leadership and Organizational Culture

- IOM launched its first ever **External Evaluation** on PSEAH highlighting key achievements, gaps, and recommendations.
- IOM has invested heavily in PSEA operational capacity at the field level, with **73 PSEA staff** now in place in **almost 50 countries**.
- In line with the United Nations (UN) Management Accountability Framework (MAF), IOM launched a **system of sharing non-identifying SEA allegations** against IOM staff with the **highest-level UN official within country** through the respective Chief of Mission. At the same time, all victims are systematically linked to assistance services, based on their expressed needs and wishes.





PILLAR 2:

Institutional Accountability and Transparency

- **The Ethics and Conduct Office (ECO)** launched its online self-paced micromodule specifically focusing on **retaliation**. The training follows the issuance of IN/282, IOM's policy on **Protection Against Retaliation for Reporting Misconduct or Cooperating with Investigations and Audits** and is available to all personnel in the three IOM official languages. Further, ECO coordinated both online and in-person trainings on ethical behavior, reporting misconduct, including SEAH, and seeking protection against retaliation for over 3,300 IOM personnel.
- As part of joint IOM efforts, ECO, the Department of Human Resources (DHR), and Office of the Ombudsperson (OOM) delivered three regional **in-person Trainings of Trainers (ToT) on IOM's updated policy on a Respectful Working Environment (IN/90 rev.1)**, which include aspects of **sexual harassment**. In 2023, trainings were organized in Kenya (May 2023), Panama (August 2023), and Thailand (September 2023). Additional ToTs are planned for 2024, reaching the remaining IOM regional offices.
- In line with best practices within the UN system, OIG developed internal **Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)** which guide investigators on adopting a **victim-centered approach** throughout its investigation processes.
- IOM focused on the recruitment of qualified investigators with experience and a **strong skillset in sexual**

misconduct investigations and trauma-informed interviewing. Two (2) investigators were recently recruited with an additional four (4) investigators in the pipeline.

Of the **22 SEAH allegations** received by IOM in 2023, five (5) resulted in disciplinary action, eight (8) were closed after the review process, and nine (9) remain in progress (4 already received a charges letter).

PSEA matters received in 2023
by status of review as of November 2023

Review ongoing	SEA	SH	TOTAL
Review ongoing	5	2	7
Closed after review	4	3	7
Disciplinary process completed	2	3	5
Disciplinary process commenced and ongoing	2	0	2
TOTAL	13	8	21

- Review ongoing – a disciplinary process has not commenced.
- Closed after review - either because allegations were found unsubstantiated or the staff member separated before conclusion of investigations or disciplinary processes.
- Disciplinary process completed - either disciplinary or administrative measures imposed.
- Disciplinary process commenced and ongoing – charges letters have been issued.

“Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment have no place in any part of IOM. This report shows we are making progress, but we still have much work to do to protect the people and communities we serve, and IOM staff and personnel. Combating sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment will remain a top priority for IOM.”

Amy Pope,
IOM Director General



PILLAR 3:

Communication, Capacity-Development and Behavior Change

- IOM has been proactive in conducting awareness raising activities across the globe. This year, a **total of 16,148 personnel and partner staff** have completed one of IOM's PSEA training, bringing the compliance rate to 82.6%.
- **IOM translated** its mandatory online PSEA micro-modules into Arabic, Romanian, Ukrainian, Polish and Russian.
- **IOM PSEAH Toolkit and Checklist**, which was available in English, is now available in three additional languages (Arabic, French, and Spanish).
- In October 2023, **IOM held a 3-day global workshop and retreat in Jordan** for over **50 PSEA practitioners**. The workshop addressed important issues such as responding to disclosures of SEAH using a victim centered approach, a Q&A session with OIG, LEG, ECO and DHR, communicating with communities on PSEA, risk mitigation, working with partners to strengthen approaches on PSEA and sharing best practices from the field.
- In September 2023, IOM held a **two-day Training of Trainers (ToT) for 34 PSEA Focal Points from all regional offices and select country offices**, using the recently updated PSEAH webinar training material.
- In order to build a **stronger community of practice**, IOM rolled out a series of **technical webinars for**

IOM's PSEA Officers and Focal Points, across a range of topics from how to identify and address SEA risk to communicating with affected populations on PSEA, establishing complaint and feedback channels, and integrating PSEA within IOM proposals. Synergies were also strengthened with other IOM internal entities, such as colleagues responsible for Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP), Staff Welfare, and inter-agency (IASC) collaboration.



IOM staff, related personnel and external partner staff trained on PSEA



IOM's PSEA training compliance rate



IOM PSEAH Training of Trainers (ToT) for PSEA focal points held in Geneva, September 2023 © IOM

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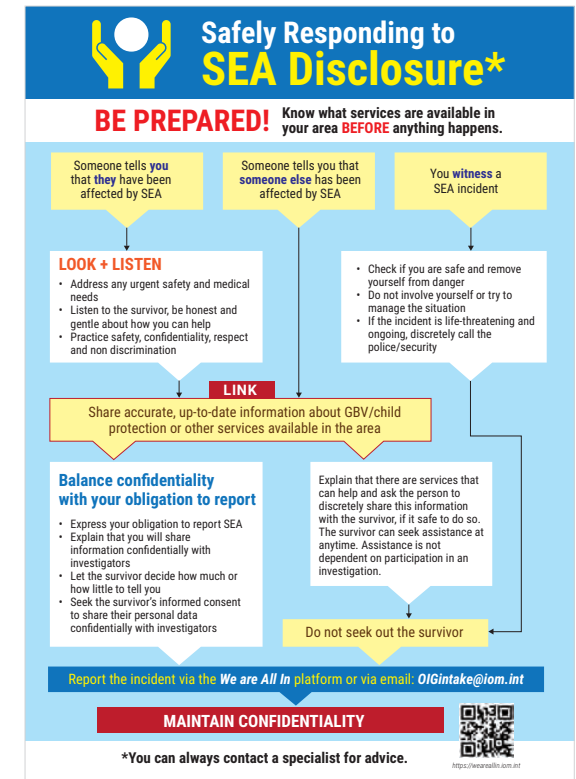
PILLAR 4:

Quality and Accessible Victim Assistance

- To ensure a stronger victim-centered approach within IOM, **all SEA reports** are now systematically referred to the PSEAH Unit to enable immediate follow up, guidance and coordination on the **provision of assistance services to victims of SEA**. This approach ensures closer coordination amongst HQ entities - PSEAH Unit, OIG, and the Department of Legal Affairs (LEG) – as well as within the respective IOM offices at the country level.
- A series of webinars, capacity building materials and guidance documents were specifically created for IOM PSEA Officers, PSEA Focal Points and Protection Specialists on how to **respond to SEA disclosures** from adults and children. Specifically, these new resources explain the limits of confidentiality and how to balance mandatory reporting obligations; how to seek consent to share personal data; how to explain survivors' rights; and how to explain reporting processes and investigations. **The resources also provide guidance on supporting an SEA victim throughout the journey** from the point of disclosure, to accessing specialized assistance, to reporting, investigation, case closure and outcomes, and longer-term assistance.
- During the global IOM PSEAH workshop and retreat, PSEA Officers participated in an **applied theatre activity, offering a safe learning environment and opportunity to practice responding to disclosures of SEA and uphold and apply a victim-centered approach**. Participants either played the role of responder or acted as observers to guide the

actors (*responders*) on how to respond. Participants of the global workshop also experienced how a victim may face barriers when accessing assistance, as well as the roles and responsibilities of PSEA practitioners at the field-level, including the interagency PSEA Coordinator, interagency PSEA Network/Task Force, Gender-based Violence (GBV) and Child Protection Specialists, as well as other PSEA practitioners who play a central role in ensuring victims are able to access assistance services.

- A **Guidance Note, specifically for non-protection specialists, was also developed** to enable staff with limited technical expertise to also be able to effectively respond to SEA disclosures and ensure close coordination with relevant specialists.



IOM takes the issue of PSEA very seriously and, with such a large operational footprint globally, now has over 70 dedicated PSEA Officers covering 50 countries across the globe. IOM continues to lead the way on addressing PSEA within its programming, throughout its operations, and with its staff worldwide.



**Irena Vojackova, Deputy Director,
General Management & Reform ai
IOM HQ**



PILLAR 5:

Partnerships and Coordination

- In 2023, **IOM joined the UN Partnership Portal (UNPP)**, joining other UN agencies. Amongst other benefits, the UNPP will strengthen collaboration with implementing partners and support PSEA capacity and development.
- IOM continues to strengthen **interagency, collective PSEA action within development settings**. Most recently, the UN Country Team (UNCT) in Mauritius and Seychelles invited **IOM** and the **UN Under-Secretary General on Improving the UN Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, Mr. Christian Saunders** to co-develop and facilitate a **PSEA Week**. In addition to strengthening PSEA awareness amongst UN personnel in both countries, IOM led the development and delivery of tailored PSEA sessions, specifically for Heads of Agencies.
- In support of **interagency collective PSEA responses** more generally, IOM provided technical support to interagency PSEA Coordinators and UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator offices **across 37 countries**.
- Additionally, IOM worked closely with the Interagency Standing Committee (IASC) Secretariat, PSEAH Champion and NorCap to establish a **sustainable mechanism for the deployment of dedicated interagency PSEA Coordinators**, entitled the **PSEACap Coordinator Roster**. IOM's global training course for interagency PSEA Coordinators, which has **trained 187 practitioners since 2019**, was incorporated into the talent management strategy of the new roster.
- Leading on multiple priority commitments under the IASC 2023 PSEAH workplan, IOM supported the **Steering Committee** on the **Revision of the IASC Interagency Community-Based Complaint Mechanism (CBCM) approach**, in particular stronger guidance on Interagency SEA Referral Procedures.
- And finally, as part of **its commitment to collective SEA risk management at the country level**, IOM **led the development of a new approach toward collective risk assessments with practical tools and guidance**. The approach – which has gained considerable interest and momentum – was piloted in two countries and is expected to expand to more countries in 2024.



PSEA does not just involve trainings for IOM staff. If we are really going to tackle SEA effectively then we need to engage IOM beneficiaries and affected communities so that they are sensitized on their rights, including protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, and know how to report."

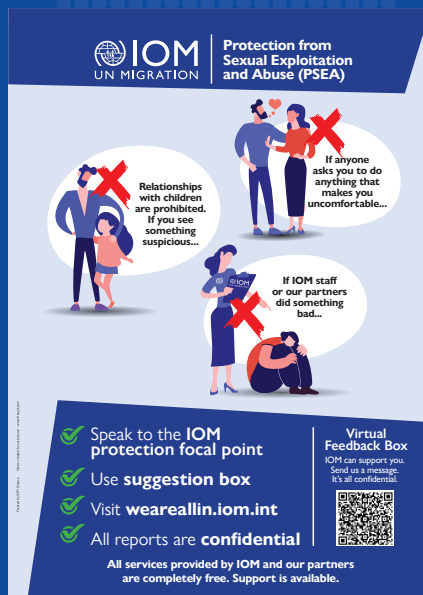


Dyane Epstein,
Senior Coordinator for PSEAH,
IOM HQ

IOM COUNTRY EFFORTS TO ADDRESS SEAH

IOM Greece

- Developed a Virtual Feedback Box, which was awarded **second place** at the IOM Global Chief of Mission **Innovation Awards** held in October 2023. The video explains the concept behind the approach and provides an easily-accessible and safe channel for beneficiaries to report. Posters, with information translated into 13 languages, accompany the Virtual Feedback Box. [Watch here.](#)



English language poster for the virtual feedback box by IOM Greece

IOM Bangladesh:

- In November, IOM Bangladesh launched the joint WFP and IOM-developed **Together We Say No** communication campaign with PSEA Focal Points from 48 international and national governmental organizations (I/NGO) and UN agencies based in Cox's Bazar. The focus was on empowering frontline workers providing assistance and services to Rohingya refugees with easy-to-understand PSEA messages.



Participants at the launch of the TWSN campaign at Cox Bazaar, November 2023 © IOM

IOM Uganda:

- IOM Uganda delivered PSEA trainings for all IOM Uganda staff and service providers, including interpreters, guards and cleaners and obtained a 95% compliance rate. The training was crucial in reminding staff and service providers basic information on PSEA, assistance referral pathways for victims of SEA, and emphasized the role everyone plays in ensuring IOM maintains an environment free of SEA.



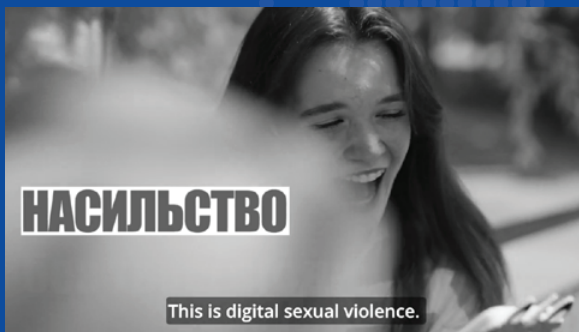
IOM COUNTRY EFFORTS TO ADDRESS SEAH

IOM Tajikistan:

- IOM Tajikistan delivered training for IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix enumerators on how to survey Afghan nationals on issues such as employability and socio-economic status and how to safely respond to PSEA disclosures.

IOM Ukraine:

- An information campaign dedicated to SEA against adolescents was particularly successful due to the active participation of youth influencers from TikTok and Instagram. The video, which addressed the culture of victim blaming and silence, reached over 1 million social media users, with many comments stating that the topic is relevant and important, while the overall campaign reached over 4.3 million accounts. [Watch here.](#)



IOM Lebanon:

- IOM Lebanon, in collaboration with UNICEF, delivered two trainings using the IOM-developed risk assessment tool on assessing SEA risks at the project level. Positive feedback was received from the 80 participants, representing 50 organizations, on the practical use of the tool. No doubt, proposals were strengthened through the inclusion of PSEA mitigation measures.

IOM Niger:

- IOM Niger actively participates in inter-agency PSEA efforts and launched the joint World Food Program (WFP) and IOM-developed **Together We Say No (TWSN)** communication campaign in Agadez and Niamey in both French and English. Water bottles, mouse pads, and posters with the TWSN slogans were handed out to help spread the messages.

IOM Guinea:

- IOM Guinea co-organized a PSEA training as a technical partner with the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator and the national Ministry of Defense which was attended by 650 participants from the Ministry of Defense and the national gendarmerie.
- IOM Guinea produced a PSEA awareness-raising video in French. The video will be translated into English, Soussou, Malinké, Poulard and Guersé shortly.

IOM Rwanda:

- IOM Rwanda sensitized over 200 refugees benefiting from resettlement assistance with information on PSEA. These interventions contribute to enhanced awareness on PSEA and reporting channels to use. IOM is assessing the results achieved, thus far, and lessons learned to design future interventions.



Continuing the momentum of PSEA awareness raising with IOM beneficiaries in Rwanda, refugee transit centers were regularly visited, and IOM personnel were reminded of their responsibility to address PSEA © IOM



IOM COUNTRY EFFORTS TO ADDRESS SEAH

IOM Moldova:

- In June 2023, eight IOM implementing partners jointly worked with **IOM Moldova** on the development of policies for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, protection from retaliation, and the code of conduct in a two-day workshop organized for the first time by a UN agency in Moldova.



IOM Moldova develops PSEA policies with eight IOM implementing partners during a two-day workshop in June 2023. © IOM

IOM Thailand:

- IOM Thailand organized a series of PSEA face-to-face trainings and briefings in three languages (Thai, Karen and Burmese) across its offices and operations. IOM personnel who have direct contact with beneficiaries were prioritized.



IOM Thailand in-person PSEA trainings © IOM

IOM Sri Lanka:

- IOM Sri Lanka rolled out a PSEA glossary in Tamil and Sinhalese. Using correct PSEA terminology in local languages is a frequent challenge in Sri Lanka amongst humanitarian organizations. The PSEA glossary was widely shared across humanitarian organizations, including UN agencies.



Cover page of the IOM Sri Lanka PSEA glossary

IOM COUNTRY EFFORTS TO ADDRESS SEAH

IOM South Africa:

- IOM South Africa continued to raise awareness on PSEA through trainings and information raising-awareness sessions delivered to 69 IOM personnel, 41 staff of implementing partners, 90 service provider employees, and 180 beneficiaries.



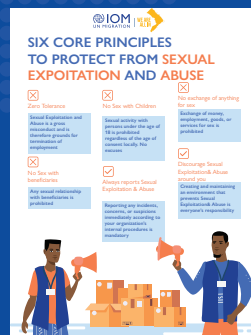
IOM South Africa PSEA staff training for HR, programs, Operations Unit, Finance and ground staff © IOM

IOM Democratic Republic of Congo:

- IOM DRC led the training of 675 persons - 114 IOM personnel, 230 implementing partner staff, 139 government stakeholders (109 from the Ministry of Health), 74 contractors, 98 daily workers, and 20 members of the Interagency PSEA Network.

IOM Burundi:

- IOM Burundi developed Information, Education and Communication (IEC) PSEA materials for staff and beneficiaries in four languages (English, French, Kirundi and Swahili). The information materials are posted in strategic locations within all sites where IOM is operating.



IEC PSEA material from IOM Burundi



IOM Burundi internal PSEAH training © IOM

IOM Nigeria:

- Four (4) temporary shelters for vulnerable returned migrants were assessed for SEA risks. The assessment sought to identify and mitigate the risk of SEA caused by the shelter personnel, operations, and services, and it included recommendations for safer programming and capacity building information for shelter staff.

IOM Mozambique:

- IOM Mozambique, in coordination with the interagency PSEA Network, supported the revision of the Code of Conduct of the National Institute for Disaster Risk Management, which now includes provisions on misconduct such as abuse of power and SEA perpetrated by government officials and community leaders. IOM also contributed with the printing of 20,000 copies of the Code of Conduct to be distributed among the Community Committees as part of the National Contingency Plan, ahead of the rainy season.

IOM Ghana:

- IOM Ghana supported the development of a national PSEAH policy, awareness raising materials, and reporting platform for the Ghana immigration Service (GIS). Additionally, IOM and GIS worked closely to review and validate PSEAH policy awareness materials and the online reporting platform ahead of the launch.



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