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Agenda item 128

Sexual exploitation and abuse: implementing a zero-tolerance policy

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 6 September 2024

[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/78/L.109)*]

78/331. United Nations action on sexual exploitation and abuse

The General Assembly,

Recalling the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law,

Recalling also its resolutions [71/278](#) of 10 March 2017, [72/312](#) of 13 September 2018, [73/302](#) of 20 June 2019, [75/321](#) of 2 September 2021, [76/303](#) of 2 September 2022 and [77/333](#) of 25 August 2023 on United Nations action on sexual exploitation and abuse, [72/304](#) of 13 July 2018, [73/293](#) of 20 May 2019, [74/277](#) of 18 June 2020, [75/281](#) of 24 May 2021, [76/263](#) of 10 May 2022, [77/302](#) of 29 June 2023 and [78/291](#) of 28 June 2024 on the comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects, resolution [71/297](#) of 30 June 2017 and section IV of resolution [76/274](#) of 29 June 2022 on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and resolutions [72/112](#) of 7 December 2017, [73/196](#) of 20 December 2018, [74/181](#) of 18 December 2019, [75/132](#) of 15 December 2020, [76/106](#) of 9 December 2021, [77/98](#) of 7 December 2022 and [78/102](#) of 7 December 2023 on criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission, and taking note of Security Council resolutions [2242 \(2015\)](#) of 13 October 2015 and [2272 \(2016\)](#) of 11 March 2016,

Strongly condemning, and expressing deep concern about, sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel throughout the system, as well as by non-United Nations personnel serving under a mandate of the Security Council, and underscoring the commitment of Member States to strengthening measures to address sexual exploitation and abuse,

Acknowledging the work of all United Nations personnel throughout the United Nations system, including peacekeepers, who serve the purposes and principles of the



Charter, and stressing that the actions of a few will not be allowed to tarnish the achievements of all,

Noting with concern that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic exacerbated risks of sexual exploitation and abuse and affected the capacity to address and investigate allegations and provide victims with assistance, and further stressing that everyone should remain safe from sexual exploitation and abuse, including while receiving any kind of aid, assistance, protection or services from the United Nations system and its implementing partners, and noting the importance of ensuring that confidential reporting channels and support services are expeditious and accessible,

Welcoming the commitment by the United Nations to eradicate sexual exploitation and abuse,

1. *Reaffirms its commitment* to the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse throughout the United Nations system, including the agencies, funds and programmes, and takes note of the report of the Secretary-General;¹

2. *Notes with concern* that the COVID-19 pandemic exposed those in vulnerable situations to increased risks of sexual exploitation and abuse and limited the capacity of the Organization to provide victims and relevant Member States with assistance and to investigate allegations, urges the Secretary-General to continue to prioritize preventative action across the United Nations system, and calls upon the Secretary-General to remain actively engaged and, in collaboration with Member States, to scale up efforts to create a harmonized approach to preventing sexual exploitation and abuse throughout the United Nations system, including by enhancing the alignment of the policies and practices of the Organization;

3. *Reaffirms* that all categories of United Nations personnel must be held to the same standard of conduct so as to keep people safe from harm, while also preserving the credibility, impartiality, integrity and reputation of the United Nations, and remains committed to further consideration of ways of ensuring managerial, command and individual accountability;

4. *Stresses* the importance of Member States holding accountable those responsible for sexual exploitation and abuse, in a timely and appropriate manner, and that prevention and accountability are critical for the United Nations and its Member States to demonstrate their collective commitment to the zero-tolerance policy and for maintaining the trust of the international community and providing justice for victims, in this regard emphasizes that accountability rests on the cooperation of the Member States, and also emphasizes the need to enhance international cooperation in this regard;

5. *Reaffirms its support* to the United Nations for its efforts to implement the zero-tolerance policy, in particular to strengthen the Organization's prevention, reporting, enforcement and remedial actions in order to promote greater accountability, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General to continue to work in close consultation with Member States for the effective implementation of the policy;

6. *Stresses* that enhanced accountability and transparency at all levels, including at the senior leadership level, both at Headquarters and in the field, contribute positively to combating sexual exploitation and abuse;

7. *Recognizes* that a culture of impunity could result in an increase in sexual exploitation and abuse, and in this regard underlines the necessity of immediate, safe

¹ A/78/774.

and appropriate measures, including through investigations and prosecution where appropriate, and of reporting to the United Nations promptly on action taken;

8. *Underscores* that predeployment and in-mission training on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse plays an effective role in raising awareness about the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on such acts, and encourages relevant stakeholders, including Member States and the Secretariat, in accordance with their different responsibilities, to continue to collaborate to ensure that mandatory, effective, monitored and targeted training on sexual exploitation and abuse is implemented;

9. *Also underscores* that troop-contributing countries bear the responsibility for investigating, and troop- and police-contributing countries bear the responsibility for holding their personnel accountable for perpetrating, acts of sexual exploitation and abuse in accordance with their national laws, in this regard takes note of Security Council resolution [2272 \(2016\)](#), and requests the Secretary-General to consult with Member States, as appropriate, in particular troop- and police-contributing countries, regarding the implementation of the Operational Guidance for the Implementation of Security Council Resolution [2272 \(2016\)](#);

10. *Stresses* the importance of further improving the collaboration between the Secretary-General, United Nations system entities and Member States, including troop- and police-contributing countries, regarding preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse to improve accountability and transparency and support for victims, and emphasizes the need to maintain a frequent exchange of information on all aspects related to sexual exploitation and abuse;

11. *Requests* the Secretary-General and all relevant entities to continue to immediately inform the Member States concerned about allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel system-wide, as well as by non-United Nations personnel serving under a Security Council mandate, of which United Nations entities may become aware, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the Member States concerned receive all available information to allow for appropriate follow-up by their national authorities;

12. *Pays tribute* to all peacekeepers who risk their lives while serving in United Nations peacekeeping operations, underscores that acts of sexual exploitation and abuse damage the credibility, effectiveness and reputation of the United Nations, in this regard commends the troop- and police-contributing countries that have taken effective steps to prevent and investigate acts of sexual exploitation and abuse, and combat impunity and hold accountable those individuals responsible for such acts, and highlights the importance of establishing best practices within the United Nations system;

13. *Calls upon* Member States deploying non-United Nations forces authorized under a Security Council mandate to take appropriate steps to investigate allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse and to hold perpetrators accountable, and urges all non-United Nations forces authorized under a Security Council mandate to take adequate measures to prevent, and combat impunity for, sexual exploitation and abuse by their personnel;

14. *Underscores* that victims of sexual exploitation and abuse should be at the core of the United Nations efforts, throughout the United Nations system, in implementing the zero-tolerance policy, in this regard highlights the importance of providing expeditious support to them and welcomes voluntary contributions to the trust fund in support of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, encourages the Secretary-General to strengthen coordination across United Nations entities in order for victims to safely access immediate basic assistance and support in accordance

with their individual needs, and also encourages the relevant authorities of non-United Nations personnel serving under a mandate of the Security Council to provide adequate and immediate assistance and support to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by their personnel;

15. *Takes note* of the pilot mapping of victims' services, capacities and approaches completed in May 2020 by the Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate, through which it was noted in particular that there was no cohesive system-wide tool to track services and assistance received by victims, and requests the Secretary-General to analyse shortcomings that were identified through the mapping exercise and present possible solutions to support and track victims' access to and utilization of services;

16. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-ninth session the item entitled "Sexual exploitation and abuse: implementing a zero-tolerance policy", and requests the Secretary-General to continue to submit annual reports, pursuant to resolution [57/306](#) of 15 April 2003, on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, including on progress made in implementing a zero-tolerance policy within the United Nations system, as well as on emerging best practices and lessons learned, for consideration by the General Assembly under the aforementioned item, in line with existing mandates and procedures.

*108th plenary meeting
6 September 2024*