

UN launches 24-hour hotline for staff to report sexual harassment

The United Nations is launching a 24-hour helpline to enable staff to call out sexual harassment in the workplace, Secretary-General António Guterres said on Monday.

“The [helpline](#) is a 24-hour resource for UN Secretariat personnel to speak confidentially with an impartial and trained individual who can provide information on protection, support and reporting mechanisms,” said Mr. Guterres in his email sent to staff members.

Going live tomorrow, the ‘Speak up’ helpline is part of the UN’s [five-point plan](#) to address such behavior within its ranks and will complement existing reporting mechanisms.

The goal is to attend to the needs of personnel, and to empower them to make informed decisions on action, if they choose, he said.

The Investigations Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services will, with immediate effect, take responsibility for investigating all complaints of sexual harassment, and implement a streamlined, fast-tracked procedure to receive, process and address complaints.

A specialized team focusing on the investigation of sexual harassment is being created, and additional investigators are under recruitment, with particular attention given to increasing the number of female investigators, Mr. Guterres said.

“I reiterate my commitment to zero tolerance of sexual harassment, and underline that harassment of any type is antithetical to the principles for which we stand as an Organization,” he said.

As members of a standard-setting institution, he said, the UN must be committed to fostering an inclusive environment in which every person is valued and respected. A harmonious, safe and civil workplace is a key to delivering on its mandates for the people it serves.