

UN receives 40 allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in last quarter of 2017

The United Nations has received 40 allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse across its entities and implementing partners for the last three months of 2017, including 15 reported from peacekeeping operations, UN Spokesman Stéphane Dujarric announced on Thursday.

“Not all allegations have been fully verified, and many are in the preliminary assessment phase,” Mr. Dujarric told reporters at the regular briefing at UN Headquarters in New York.

The remaining 25 allegations were reported by UN agencies, funds and programmes, and include eight allegations relating to implementing partners.

Of the 40 allegations, 13 are categorized as sexual abuse, 24 as sexual exploitation, and three are of an unknown nature.

The allegations involve 54 victims; 30 are women and 16 are girls under the age of 18, and the ages of 8 others are unknown, with 12 of the 40 allegations occurred in 2017, seven in 2016, three in or before 2015, and the dates unknown for 18 of them.

Two allegations have been substantiated by an investigation; there were not substantiated; 15 are at various stages of investigation; 18 are under preliminary assessment; two are under review with limited information provided to the investigating entity, Mr. Dujarric said.

“With over 95,000 civilians and 90,000 uniformed personnel working for the UN, sexual exploitation and abuse are not reflective of the conduct of the majority of the dedicated women and men who serve the Organization,” he said, emphasizing however that “every allegation involving our personnel undermines our values and principles and the sacrifice of those who serve with pride and professionalism in some of the most dangerous places in the world.”

For this reason, Mr. Dujarric stressed, combating this scourge, and helping and empowering those who have been scarred by these egregious acts, continue to be key priorities for UN [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) in 2018.

Measures taken by the UN include:

- Developing an electronic tool for screening UN staff dismissed as a result of substantiated allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, or who resigned or were dismissed during an investigation.
- A mandatory e-learning module for personnel within the UN system, as well as implementing partners and contractors, on prevention and reporting of sexual exploitation and abuse.

- The distribution of the “no excuse cards” in the six official languages and other languages across the UN system on UN personnel’s responsibilities and obligations with respect to conduct, as well as preventing and reporting sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Mandated quarterly reporting from all relevant entities across the UN system.
- The Secretary-General is regularly liaising with Member States to improve their accountability and bring justice to victims.
- Strengthening complaint reception mechanisms on the ground to enable victims to come forward, and conducting outreach activities to inform communities on the risks of sexual exploitation and abuse and the reporting mechanisms using various forms ranging from direct outreach, theatre, radio and TV programming, SMS-based and social media campaigns as well as specific outreach to local media.
- Improving reporting and data collection methods, including through the development of a system-wide incident reporting form.