

Overview of services available to victims of sexual exploitation and abuses in Colombia

Victims of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel may access services that are available to gender-based violence (GBV) victims. Such services, mainly located in urban areas, are provided through the State, civil society organizations, and regular programming of implementing partners of United Nations entities. Some of the available GBV services benefit from United Nations cooperation and/or provision of policy or institutional support. Some United Nations entities provide direct assistance to GBV victims, strengthening State service provision, or ensuring access to services through ongoing programming with implementing partners. The Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate



Venezuelan refugees and migrants cross the Simon Bolivar Bridge into Colombia. March 2019. UNHCR/Siegfried Modola

(OVRA) was not informed of dedicated services or funds for United Nations entities to provide assistance and support specifically to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by its personnel. However, the inter-agency Task Force for the Prevention from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, created in 2018, could facilitate referrals to such assistance if cases are reported. The Task Force has advocated for mapping of local services that could be available for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. Access to justice, healthcare and other services for victims of sexual gender-based violence, particularly in rural areas is a challenge.

Findings and recommendations

on United Nations assistance and support to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse

- United Nations entities are able to provide information on services available from the State for victims and **refer victims of sexual exploitation and abuse** to these. Some United Nations entities work with implementing partners on GBV programmes/projects that may be available to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse.
- There are **insufficient shelters and services outside of urban areas**, particularly for populations at risk. These include Venezuelans with no documentation or irregular migratory status and indigenous and Afro-Colombian people, persons with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons.
- A **full-time interagency PSEA Coordinator is in place** and seeks to strengthen coordinated system-wide implementation of PSEA measures, including through an interagency **protocol on referral to victims' assistance services**.
- The **OVRA recommends** that United Nations entities in Colombia **reinforce victims' assistance**, including through **follow-up**, informed by **victims' feedback**.
- United Nations entities in Colombia should **consider creation of a system-wide pooled funding strategy** to cover **assistance to victims**, complementary to existing services. Opportunities for joint fundraising by United Nations entities should be explored.
- The United Nations in Colombia should **consider the adoption of a uniform system-wide tracking and monitoring mechanism for victims' assistance** that is consistently used and updated. Such a mechanism should include details on referrals for assistance, assistance received and information on service providers.

