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Gender-Based Violence in emergencies: a UNFPA priority

Gender-Based Violence is defined as any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and is based on socially ascribed gender differences between males and females. GBV is a life-threatening, global health and human rights issue that violates international human rights law and principles of gender equality. During emergencies such as conflicts or natural disasters, the risk of violence, exploitation and abuse is heightened, particularly for women and girls. At the same time, national systems and community and social support networks are often weakened and an environment of impunity may mean that perpetrators are not held to account.

In these situations, UNFPA works to support the efforts of national authorities, humanitarian organizations and local communities to uphold the dignity and rights of all affected persons and reach those who are most at risk, especially women and girls.



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As a strategic priority, UNFPA has committed to scale up humanitarian action and enhance organizational capacity to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in emergencies.

UNFPA works to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in humanitarian settings by drawing upon its global expertise in areas such as sexual and reproductive health, pre-natal care, its work to address the specific needs and concerns of young people and its efforts to help women and girls maintain their health and dignity. As co-lead of the GBV Area of Responsibility of the Global Protection Cluster, UNFPA is responsible for working with national authorities and other humanitarian actors to coordinate efforts to prevent and respond to GBV in emergencies. With regard to data during emergencies, UNFPA works closely with humanitarian organizations and national statistical organizations in facilitating the safe and ethical collection, analysis, dissemination, and use of reliable data and information.



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The Minimum Standards as well as tools and resources to support roll-out are available here:
www.unfpa.org/GBViEStandards

Minimum Standards

for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies

“Together we must ensure that action to prevent and respond to gender-based violence is a priority — a systematic and unquestionable part of our humanitarian response, at the heart of UNFPA's work to improve the health, safety, and well-being of women and girls in emergencies.”

— Babatunde Osotimehin,
UNFPA Executive Director



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The purpose of the Minimum Standards is to promote the safety and well-being of women, men, boys and girls in emergencies by providing practical guidance on how to prevent GBV in emergencies and facilitate access to multi-sector services for survivors.

The Minimum Standards are universal and applicable in ALL humanitarian contexts.

To achieve this goal, the 18 inter-connected Minimum Standards define what UNFPA must do together with partners, national authorities, communities and other humanitarian actors to prevent, mitigate and respond to GBV in emergencies.

Each Standard includes:

- **Key actions** to achieve each standard
- **Guidance notes** that address priority issues and common programming challenges
- **Indicators** to measure progress towards achieving the standard
- **Tools and additional resources**

The **Minimum Standards** are based on international good practice and draw upon lessons from the field. The Standards provide guidance on how to prevent, mitigate and respond to GBV and how to coordinate GBV in emergencies.

The Minimum Standards can be used and applied to:

- Guide GBV humanitarian prevention and response strategies
- Support and build on efforts by national authorities, humanitarian organizations, and local communities to address GBV in emergencies
- Ensure that GBV prevention and response are prioritized in emergencies
- Establish common and measurable expectations
- Induct and train staff and partners
- Support GBV coordination & advocacy
- Support recovery by laying the groundwork for establishment of quality services and systems to prevent and respond to GBV in emergencies where they were previously weak or non-existent

Minimum Standards for Prevention and Response to GBV in Emergencies

1 Foundational Standards

- 1. Participation:** Communities, including women and girls, must be engaged as active partners to end GBV and to promote survivors' access to services.
- 2. National Systems:** Actions to prevent, mitigate and respond to GBV in emergencies strengthen national systems and build local capacities.
- 3. Positive Gender & Social Norms:** Preparedness, prevention and response programming promotes positive social and gender norms to address GBV.
- 4. Collecting & Using Data:** Quality, disaggregated, gender sensitive data on the nature and scope of GBV and on the availability and accessibility of services informs programming decisions, policy dialogue and advocacy.

2 Mitigation, Prevention & Response Standards

- 5. Healthcare:** GBV survivors, including women, men, girls and boys, access quality, life-saving healthcare services, specifically clinical management of rape (CMR).
- 6. Mental Health & Psychosocial Support:** GBV survivors have safe access to quality mental health and psychosocial support focused on healing, empowerment and recovery.
- 7. Safety & Security:** Safety and security measures are in place to prevent and mitigate gender based violence and protect survivors.
- 8. Dignity Kits:** Culturally relevant dignity kits distributed to affected populations to reduce vulnerability and connect women and girls to information and support services.
- 9. Justice & Legal Aid:** The legal and justice sectors protect survivors' rights and support their access to justice consistent with international standards.
- 10. Socio-Economic Empowerment:** Women and adolescent girls access livelihood support to mitigate the risk of GBV, and survivors access socio-economic support as part of a multi-sector response.
- 11. Referral Systems:** Referral systems are established to connect women, girls and other at-risk groups to appropriate multi-sector GBV prevention and response services in a timely and safe manner.
- 12. Mainstreaming:** GBV risk mitigation and survivor support are integrated across humanitarian sectors at every stage of the programme cycle and throughout the emergency response.

3 Coordination & Operational Standards

- 13. Preparedness & Assessment:** Potential GBV risks and vulnerable groups are identified through quality gender sensitive assessments and risk mitigation measures are put in place before the onset of an emergency.
- 14. Coordination:** Coordination results in effective action to protect women and girls, boys and men, mitigate and prevent gender-based violence, and promote survivors' access to multi-sector services.
- 15. Advocacy & Communication:** Coordinated advocacy and communication leads to increased funding and changes in policies and practice that mitigate the risk of GBV, promote resilience of women and girls, and encourage a protective environment for all.
- 16. Monitoring & Evaluation:** Objective information collected ethically and safely, is used to improve the quality and accountability of GBV programs.
- 17. Human Resources:** Qualified, competent, skilled staff are rapidly recruited and deployed to design, coordinate and/or implement programmes to prevent and respond to GBV in emergencies.
- 18. Resource Mobilization:** Dedicated financial resources are mobilized in a timely manner to prevent, mitigate and respond to GBV in emergencies.

