

# **CALL TO ACTION** **on Protection from** **Gender-Based Violence in** **Emergencies**

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**Road Map 2021-2025**

**Overview**

# Introduction

**The Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies (Call to Action)** is a groundbreaking global initiative to fundamentally transform the way gender-based violence (GBV) is addressed in humanitarian action. The aim is to drive change and foster accountability so that every humanitarian effort, from the earliest phases of a crisis, includes the policies, systems, and mechanisms necessary to prevent, mitigate, and respond to GBV, especially violence against women and girls.

GBV is a horrifying reality and human rights violation for women and girls globally. It is a power, health, rights, and protection issue that is deeply rooted in gender inequality and structural norms that disempower and discriminate. The risk of violence, exploitation, and abuse is heightened during emergencies. Crises weaken national systems, such as health and legal systems, and community and social support networks. This breakdown of systems can reduce access to health services, including sexual and reproductive health services, and legal services, leading to an environment of impunity in which perpetrators are not held to account<sup>1</sup>. While women and girls are disproportionately affected by GBV, the risks of sexual violence against men and boys can also rise in crises.

Early and sustained action to prevent, mitigate, and respond to GBV is at the heart of the humanitarian mandate. It is a collective responsibility that requires all elements of the humanitarian system to do their part. Yet, GBV was not historically considered a lifesaving priority in humanitarian response. The Call to Action was launched in 2013 to meet this challenge head on. By the end of 2019, there were over 80 global Call to Action partners. Partners are states and donors, international organizations, and international, national, and local non-governmental organizations, each bringing their unique strengths and capacities to drive change. The strength of the Call to Action lies in the power of collective action and the shared commitment of diverse stakeholders to accountability for results. Its success will be judged by the tangible difference the Call to Action makes in the lives of women, girls, families and communities affected by crises.

## The Call to Action Road Map

A five-year Road Map<sup>2</sup> guides the work of the partnership. The Road Map represents partners' shared vision for a humanitarian system that comprehensively addresses GBV and promotes gender equality in all phases of the response. The recently updated 2021-2025 Road Map<sup>3</sup> builds on the achievements and learning of the last five years and addresses ongoing gaps that require urgent action. It largely retains the substance of the original Road Map's goal and objectives. In addition, this Road Map sets out core principles that are foundational to the collective efforts of the partnership and are critical to achieving the vision of the Call to Action.

To achieve the goal and objectives of the Call to Action, the Outcomes below must be met. These Outcomes have been updated

- 1 Inter-Agency Minimum Standards for Gender-Based Violence in Emergency Programming, p.V, <https://www.unfpa.org/minimum-standards>
- 2 Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies, Road Map 2021-2025 (2020), <https://www.calltoactiongbv.com/what-we-do>.
- 3 Under the leadership of the Government of Canada, the Women's Refugee Commission facilitated the development of the 2021-2025 Road Map in consultation with the Call to Action partnership.

# Core Principles

- Accountability to affected populations is paramount in implementing the Call to Action. The meaningful participation and leadership of affected populations, in particular women and girls, must be ensured.
- GBV and gender inequality are inextricably linked. To end GBV, systemic equality between women and men must be established.
- Women and girls are a priority focus for the Call to Action because of their documented higher risk of GBV, the overarching discrimination they experience, and their lack of safe and equitable access to humanitarian assistance.
- An intersectional approach is key for effective survivor-centered programming. This requires an understanding of how aspects of a person's social and political identities might combine or intersect to heighten protection risks.
- The engagement, leadership, and participation of local organizations and local leaders, particularly women and women's organizations, is critical to effective humanitarian action.
- Sustained collective action and accountability by all partners in the humanitarian system—at every level and across all sectors—are essential to achieve the goal of the Call to Action.

## The Action Plan

The Action Plan is the central component of the Road Map. It lays out the priority outcomes and transformative action areas to meet the Call to Action's goal and objectives. Stakeholders make commitments to the Key Action Areas based on their roles, responsibilities, and capacities.

## Goal

The goal of the Call to Action is to drive change and foster accountability within the humanitarian sphere so that every humanitarian effort, from the start, includes the policies, systems, and mechanisms necessary to provide safe and comprehensive services to those affected by GBV, to prevent GBV, and mitigate GBV risks, especially violence against women and girls.

## Objectives

1. Establish specialized GBV services and programs that are accessible to anyone affected by GBV and are available from the onset of an emergency.
2. Integrate and implement actions to prevent GBV and to mitigate GBV risk across all levels and sectors of humanitarian response from the earliest stages of an emergency and throughout the program cycle.
3. Mainstream gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls throughout humanitarian action.

## Road Map Outcomes

in consultation with Call to Action partners to reflect current realities. There are Key Action Areas (KAAs) under each Outcome. Partners make measurable commitments to specific KAAs and publicly report each year on their commitments. The monitoring framework for the Road Map also includes indicators by Outcome with benchmarks and targets that are measured and reported annually.

### Outcome 1. Policy Frameworks and Capacity

Actors working in humanitarian settings have the institutional and system-wide policies and capacity to address GBV, promote gender equality, and ensure accountability.

### Outcome 2. Coordination

Effective coordination within the GBV sector, and between other relevant actors and the GBV sector, ensures action and accountability to prevent and respond to GBV at all levels of the response.

### Outcome 3. Data, Assessment, and Analysis

Data on GBV and gender equality is collected, shared, stored and analyzed in consultation with GBV and gender experts, and supports humanitarian planning, programming and funding decisions.<sup>4</sup>

### Outcome 4. Funding

Sufficient funding is provided for GBV and gender equality staffing, interventions, initiatives, and programs during every phase of emergency response.

### Outcome 5. Specialized GBV Programming

GBV prevention and response programming, including specialized services, that meet the Inter-Agency Minimum Standards for GBV in Emergencies Programming are implemented in every phase of emergency response.

### Outcome 6. GBV Risk Mitigation

GBV risk mitigation and promotion of gender equality are effectively integrated into program design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation across all humanitarian sectors in line with the IASC Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action.

<sup>4</sup> In keeping with established inter-agency standards, actions to address GBV must be undertaken from the start of a humanitarian response regardless of the immediate availability of data. This reflects the reality that GBV occurs in every crisis, but there are multiple barriers to timely reporting.

## Requirements of Membership

To join the Call to Action, a stakeholder agrees to affirm the goal, objectives and core principles of the Call to Action. Members must also adopt and implement organizational policies on GBV and gender equality in humanitarian action and on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. Partners must either have these policies in place or agree to develop them upon joining the Call to Action. Every partner must make at least two public commitments under the Road Map and report annually on progress in meeting the commitments. And partners must contribute to the collective work of the initiative including participation in working group meetings and the annual partners meeting, as resources allow. Additional information on membership is on the website.

The Call to Action looks forward to welcoming many more partners, particularly governments, women's organizations, and other civil society groups from crisis-affected areas and settings that are prone to natural disasters.