



PROJECT SOTERIA

Preventing perpetrators of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment from working in the aid sector

THE SITUATION

Perpetrators of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH) have exploited their positions in the aid sector, harming the very people they are meant to protect and assist, with so far, limited chances of being identified.

Aid organizations employ highly mobile international and national staff to work in fragile environments. These individuals deliver crucial development and humanitarian assistance to people living in crisis-affected or disadvantaged situations and marginalized communities, ensuring that no one gets left behind.

The globalized nature of aid work, combined with the urgency of fast recruitment and deployment, make it hard for organizations to conduct thorough screening of staff during recruitment processes. Without full awareness, effective detection mechanisms, reporting and communication channels, sexual offenders can continue operating within the sector, putting at risk children and adults living in situations of displacement, poverty, or other forms of marginalization.



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INTERPOL'S MANDATE

As the world's largest international police organization, INTERPOL provides a vast network of law enforcement agencies and expertise.

Our experience in investigating and combating transnational crimes, including human trafficking, child exploitation, and other forms of sexual abuse can support aid organizations in investigating and responding to SEAH cases.

INTERPOL maintains partnerships with a range of organizations, including the United Nations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to ensure coordinated action.

PROJECT AIMS

Project Soteria brings law enforcement, as well as large and small aid sector organizations, together to:

- Prevent sexual offenders from using their positions to access and offend against children and vulnerable adults.
- Improve the law enforcement response to Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), including SEAH, with a victim-centric and 'do no harm' approach.
- Strengthen the capacity of law enforcement to leverage the full range of INTERPOL's global policing tools – from INTERPOL Notices to a dedicated crime analysis file.
- Assist law enforcement agencies to increase awareness of SEAH and maintain criminal records.
- Prevent and detect cases of SEAH by facilitating information exchange and enhancing recruitment mechanisms that help detect past offenders and deter potential offenders.
- Strengthen aid sector organizations' ability to investigate misconduct related to SEAH.

Soteria seeks to build on and complement other initiatives which aim to improve safeguarding in the international aid and development sector, including through the Core Humanitarian Standard Alliance (CHSA), the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme, the Common Approach to Protection from SEAH (CAPSEAH), and other projects.

DEDICATED SECURITY CHECK FOR AID SECTOR

Project Soteria offers aid organizations a dedicated channel to deter and identify perpetrators of SEAH during the recruitment phase.

The Threat Identification Scheme (TIS) and the INTERPOL Substantiated Misconduct Referral Mechanism (SMRM) work together to receive and share data from participating aid organizations.

Participating organizations can upload selected candidates' information through a secure platform that is checked by INTERPOL criminal intelligence analysts against its databases and member country networks.

If a threat is identified, INTERPOL will notify the relevant national law enforcement agencies, who will aim to share, where applicable, the outcome with the aid sector organization.

Timeframe: May 2021 to April 2026

Budget: Up to EUR 9.6 million (£8.25 million)



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