

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

The Call to Action is a multi-stakeholder initiative launched in 2013 to fundamentally transform the way GBV is addressed in humanitarian emergencies. The aim is to drive change and foster accountability so that every humanitarian effort, from the earliest stage of a crisis, includes the policies, systems and mechanisms to mitigate GBV risks, especially violence against women and girls, and to provide safe and comprehensive services to those affected by GBV.

## Becoming a partner

### Why should Gender-Based Violence (GBV) be prioritised in humanitarian emergencies?

GBV, in all its forms, is **life-threatening** and is an everyday reality for many individuals affected by conflict and disasters, with women and girls being disproportionately affected. GBV is exacerbated in humanitarian emergencies and remains **under-reported and under-addressed**, especially at the earliest stages of a crisis. GBV must therefore be prioritised in each phase of an emergency, from preparedness and crisis onset through transition to development. Moreover, every humanitarian actor has an obligation to act, to take all possible **measures to prevent and mitigate GBV, to keep people safe and to help survivors rebuild their lives**.

### What is the aim of the Call to Action and why is it unique?

The aim of the 'Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies' is to **drive change and foster accountability** within the humanitarian sphere so that every humanitarian effort includes the policies, systems and mechanisms necessary to mitigate GBV risks, especially violence against women and girls, from the earliest phases of a crisis, and to provide safe and comprehensive services for those affected. It is a **unique global partnership** to respond to GBV and brings together States, donors, regional bodies, International Organisations (IOs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and civil society partners who together have made **more than 270 voluntary commitments** to the Road Map. The Call to Action is an unprecedented initiative that has the power to trigger the systemic changes that must be made in policy and practice to transform the humanitarian response to GBV.

### How will the partners of the Call to Action achieve this aim?

The Call to Action **Road Map 2016-2020** is the **overarching implementation framework** established

to ensure that commitments made by partners are translated into concrete and targeted actions on the ground. It identifies the priority actions to be undertaken by stakeholders dealing with policies, systems and programmes to achieve the Call to Action objective. It lays out a **five-year plan to achieve six outcomes**, as well as a governance structure for the initiative and a monitoring and evaluation plan.

### What are the concrete measures to be adopted at the global and local levels?

The Call to Action Road Map prescribes a number of concrete measures to be adopted. This includes, for instance, that humanitarian actors should adopt **institutional policies** that ensure gender equality and protection from GBV within their programming. At the field level, humanitarian actors should, among other things, **create specialised GBV prevention and response services** that are implemented in each phase of an emergency, from preparedness and crisis through to development. Furthermore, actors should **integrate and implement actions to reduce and mitigate GBV risk** across all levels and sectors of humanitarian response from the earliest stages of emergencies and throughout the program cycle. Lastly, actors should also **mainstream gender equality** and the empowerment of women and girls throughout humanitarian action. It is only by taking such concrete steps that it will be possible to achieve the six outcomes set out in the Road Map by 2020.

### How do we measure progress on the Call to Action?

Partners are asked to designate a focal point and support activities, as resources allow. Moreover, partners **monitor and account for their commitments** through annual partner reports and discussions during teleconferences and meetings. There is no requirement to fund new projects or programmes. Furthermore, the monitoring framework helps measure progress by looking at actions taken in the Key Action Areas and by using specific indicators that have been designed to achieve the Road Map outcomes.

## How does the Call to Action connect to other existing initiatives on GBV?

The Call to Action complements and reinforces other existing initiatives by providing an overarching framework under which they can situate their work. For example, both the **Inter-Agency Standing Committee GBV Guidelines**<sup>1</sup> and the **Real Time Accountability Partnership** (RTAP)<sup>2</sup> are commitments undertaken by Call to Action partners to provide guidance to humanitarian actors on the actions needed to ensure that GBV risk reduction and response services are prioritised, integrated, and coordinated across humanitarian response. In addition, GBV prevention and response is integral to the **Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda's efforts** to increase the participation of women's civil society in conflict prevention and resolution. Moreover, the Call to Action is instrumental in achieving a number of **Sustainable Development Goals**, including Goal 3 (Health) and Goal 5 (Gender Equality).

## Why should you join as a partner in the Call to Action?

The strength of the partnership lies in its **diversity** and the **collective pledge to hold ourselves accountable to one another and to the people we serve**. Our voices and our efforts are stronger together. In addition to collective progress towards a shared goal, each partner individually benefits from engagement in the initiative through ongoing support, sharing of best practices and networking. **States and Donors** benefit from strategic discussions and collective planning, including the creation of shared resources and funding plans, as well as aligning around targeted priorities and advocacy opportunities. **International organisations** have the opportunity to engage in joint efforts – including participation in trainings and development of inter-agency resources – to enhance coordination at the field level. **Non-governmental organisations** receive mutual support and collaboration from other partners implementing programmes and commitments in the field, as well as opportunities to conduct joint advocacy and partake in peer-to-peer learning and capacity-building.

## How do you become a Call to Action Partner?

A Call to Action partner agrees to:

- formally endorse the Call to Action goal and the Road Map;
- make at least two commitments aligned with Key Action Areas and Outcomes described in the Road Map;
- report annually on progress towards commitments;
- designate an organisational focal point;

- participate in stakeholder working group calls;
- attend annual partner meetings if resources allow;
- lead and/or support collective advocacy activities, and;
- support the collective effort to bring new partners into the initiative.

Practical steps:

- If your organisation/state is interested, contact the Lead/co-chair or any other partner (contact details below).
- The Lead informs about the Call to Action initiative and the implications of becoming a member.
- Once the lead has received the formal letter and commitments, the Lead sends out an email to the new partner and adds the new member to all relevant email lists.
- The new partner is directed to the co-chairs of the relevant stakeholder group.
- The co-chairs set up a telephone call to give an update of the ongoing work and to share additional key information.
- The new member is included in all relevant calls and the ongoing work of the stakeholder group and the Call to Action initiative.

**To join the Call to Action, please submit a letter of endorsement of the Call to Action, the specific commitments you are making under the Road Map, and your designated focal point to the acting Lead.** A template will be published on the website and provided by the Lead upon request.

### CONTACT

To learn more about the Call to Action and its partners, please visit  
<https://www.calltoactiongbv.com/>

The current Lead of the Call to Action is the Government of Canada. Inquiries, as well as partner letters and commitments, should be sent to Kateryna Sherysheva at:  
[calltoactiongbv@gmail.com](mailto:calltoactiongbv@gmail.com).

<sup>1</sup> <http://gbvguidelines.org/en/home/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/focal-points/documents-public/real-time-accountability-partnership-gbv-emergencies>