

“The World Health Organization has zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse and takes all allegations of misconduct seriously at all levels of our workforce. I appreciate the swift response by the National Emergency Operations Centre in Pakistan to allegations of harassment of a polio frontline worker.

WHO has an uncompromising commitment to uphold and promote policies that prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and all forms of harassment. The polio eradication programme in particular relies on female frontline workers to carry out the essential work of eradication and ensuring all enjoy a respectful and safe environment within which to work is a basic prerequisite.

Across the Eastern Mediterranean Region WHO is taking critical steps to ensure the protection and safety of all female frontline workers and to create a culture in which there is no opportunity for sexual exploitation and abuse to happen, no impunity if it does and no tolerance for inaction.

All WHO staff, consultants and contractors are receiving refresher training for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and staff with expertise in the prevention, detection and response to sexual exploitation are being recruited to ensure more robust safeguards are in place in our offices. Given the scale of our field operations in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen, WHO is taking extra measures to prevent and vigorously respond to incidents of harassment and abuse.”

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