

CHILD RIGHTS SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Reviewed by the Board of Directors on November 4, 2021



**PREMIERE
URGENCE**
INTERNATIONALE

PREAMBLE

Première Urgence Internationale (PUI) is a non-profit, non-political and non-religious international NGO.

Première Urgence Internationale provides assistance to civilian victims, marginalized or excluded by the effects of natural disasters, wars and economic collapse. Its objective is to provide a global response to all the fundamental needs of populations facing humanitarian crises, from the emergency phase to enabling them to recover their autonomy and dignity.

All children entering in contact with Première Urgence Internationale collaborators, members, partners, suppliers and associates in relation with its activities must be protected to the greatest extent possible against deliberate or involuntary actions and failures which would expose them to risks of abuse, sexual exploitation, injury and any other prejudice.

Première Urgence Internationale applies a **zero tolerance policy** towards all forms of abuse, exploitation, prejudice, maltreatment, violence, and moral or sexual harassment that compromise the safeguarding of children rights.

Première Urgence Internationale defines a "child" as any person under the age of 18¹. The organisation also makes a distinction between "child protection" and "child rights safeguarding", as follows

Child protection: *a set of programs, measures, and structures to prevent and respond to the abuse, exploitation, neglect, and violence affecting children in all sectors, contexts, and environments (mainly, the work done in child protection programs).*

Child rights safeguarding: *the duty of care and responsibility of private and public organisations to adopt preventive and reactive systems, policies and practices to protect from harm and abuse all children with whom they come into direct and indirect contact in their daily activities, operations, and work.*

This policy focuses on the Safeguarding of Children's Rights, and the responsibilities of Première Urgence Internationale in this area.

They are in addition to the obligations and standards of behavior expected of all PUI employees detailed in the Code of Conduct and Internal Staff Regulations (headquarters and mission).

OBJECTIVES

The Policy on the Safeguarding of Children's Rights aims to present the association's commitments to:

- 1. Protect the rights of children** by minimizing the intentional or unintentional risks of harm, abuse and exploitation of children directly or indirectly targeted by the actions of Première Urgence Internationale, of all children entering in contact with the organisation, and to respond appropriately to all cases of abuse or harm caused.
- 2. Protect collaborators** by preventing any ambiguous situation or behavior that could be misinterpreted or generate false allegations against Première Urgence Internationale or its collaborators.

¹ In accordance with Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

3. Protect the organisation by demonstrating its commitment to the safeguarding of children's rights and its preventive actions against abuse and exploitation. Première Urgence Internationale thus protects its reputation and maintains trust and transparency with all its partners.

SCOPE OF APPLICATION

All Première Urgence Internationale collaborators are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of behavior towards children, both in their private and professional lives. They have a responsibility to understand and promote the policy. They must make every effort to prevent, report and respond appropriately to any concerns or potential violations of the policy.

Première Urgence Internationale's Policy on the Safeguarding of Children's Rights applies to all Première Urgence Internationale collaborators, including:

- **All employees, members, administrators and associates of PUI**, hired on a full-time or part-time basis, on an ad hoc or long-term basis, regardless of their status and location.
- **All PUI partners and contractors**, including suppliers and any other entity under contract with the association or funded/supported by PUI, regardless of location.
- **All visitors** to PUI's intervention areas and activities, regardless of the location or purpose of the visit. Visitors include donors, sponsors, media representatives, families or relatives of PUI employees and associates, etc.

This policy remains in force during and after working hours and applies to all children. It defines the responsibility of all Première Urgence Internationale collaborators.

This policy is applicable in all countries in which Première Urgence Internationale intervenes, is present, and where there are collaborators. It includes all PUI premises, workplaces, and living spaces and accommodations provided for collaborators. The principles and norms detailed in this Policy also apply to all collaborators on business trips in other places, regardless of the local and national laws, customs, or practices in place.

PREMIÈRE URGENCE INTERNATIONALE COMMITMENTS

All representatives and collaborators of Première Urgence Internationale undertake in all circumstances to respect the provisions, norms, and commitments to:

1. Behave respectfully, courteously and ethically toward children regardless of their sex, ethnic or social origin, language, religious or other beliefs, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or any other status.
2. Use appropriate language and behavior towards children, and in no way harassing, abusive, sexually provocative or humiliating.
3. Never have sex with, or solicit services or sexual favors from children (anyone under the age of 18). This prohibition applies regardless of the local legal age of consent, local and national laws applicable in the workplace, and regardless of the legal age of consent in the country or locality of origin of the PUI collaborator. Ignorance or mistaken belief of the age of the child is not a mitigating factor or defense.
4. Never employ children (anyone under the age of 18) in any activity. The recruitment of children in any activity, paid or unpaid, such as domestic work, humanitarian work, or any other type of work is prohibited.
5. Never engage in any activity that could physically or emotionally harm a child, nor engage in illegal activities with or in relation to a child.
6. Never disclose personal or sensitive information about a child, including images of a child, unless the child and his or her parent or legal guardian consent;
7. Report any concerns, suspicions, or allegations of abuse, mistreatment and exploitation of a child, and any violations of this Policy in accordance with the whistleblower mechanism and recommended timelines². Suspected or disclosed harm or abuse of a child should never be ignored or overlooked.
8. Participate in mandatory awareness sessions, and any other training related to this Policy.
9. Ensure the best interests of all children involved: All reports made and handled under this Policy shall be in the best interests of the children involved. The safety, health, and well-being of the children involved should be a priority, including meeting their emotional, psychological, and physical needs.

² These procedures are detailed in PUI Ethical Framework

RESPECT OF THE STANDARDS IN FORCE

This policy is based on the applicable provisions of the French Labor Law, the French Penal Code, the organisation's duty of care, and international norms, principles and standards relating to the safeguarding of children's rights.

It is also based on the rights of the child to protection from harm, violence, abuse and exploitation, as stated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child³. It is also based on the recommendations of the Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of the United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee created in 2002, which states as follows :

« Humanitarian agencies have a duty of care to beneficiaries and a responsibility to ensure that beneficiaries are treated with dignity and respect and that certain minimum standards of behavior are met. The goal is to create an environment free of sexual exploitation and abuse, by integrating prevention of and response to sexual exploitation and abuse into the protection and assistance functions of all humanitarian workers »⁴.

Finally, Première Urgence Internationale commits to implement the 6 principles adopted in 2012 by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) regarding the prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse

PUI has adopted a standards-based approach to safeguarding and protecting children. These standards of safeguarding and behavior of collaborators are often higher than those of national laws and community customs or traditions followed in intervention areas of the association. Nevertheless, it is these standards that collaborators accept when they join Première Urgence Internationale, and it is to these standards that they will be held accountable.

Done at Asnières-sur-Seine

Date of policy: Reviewed on November 4, 2021



Vincent Basquin
President

³ <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text>

⁴ <https://pseataskforce.org/en/index.html>

DÉFINITIONS AND ANNEXES

Child: any person under the age of 18.

Child abuse: harm to a child, usually as a result of failure on the part of a parent/caregiver or organization/community to provide a level of protection and care or through deliberate harmful acts. The main categories of abuse are defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and negligent treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation:

- **Physical abuse** involves the use of violent physical force to cause actual or probable physical injury or suffering (e.g., beating, shaking, burning, female genital mutilation, torture).
- **Emotional or psychological abuse** includes humiliating and degrading treatment such as insults, constant criticism, belittlement, persistent shame, solitary confinement, and isolation.
- **Sexual abuse** includes all forms of sexual violence, including incest, early and forced marriage, rape, involvement in pornography and sexual slavery. Sexual abuse of children can also include indecent touching or exposure, use of sexually explicit language towards a child, and presentation of pornographic material to children.

Child in contact with PUI: any child within the mandate of PUI, any child to whom the organisation or its collaborators have provided assistance, directly or indirectly, any child residing or present in the areas of intervention of PUI with whom the organisation has or has had direct or indirect contact.

Commercial Exploitation: The use of a child labor or other activities for the benefit of others, including, but not limited to, child labor, child prostitution, and exploitation of children through pornography; activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education and moral or social-emotional well-being.

Emotional and/or psychological abuse: failure to provide a developmentally appropriate supportive environment, in terms of the availability of a caregiver, so that the child can reach their full potential in the context of the society in which he or she lives.

Examples include restriction of movement, belittling, denigration, scapegoating, threatening, frightening, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile treatment or rejection.

Human rights: agreed international standards that recognize and protect the dignity and integrity of every individual without distinction.

Humanitarian worker: any person working on behalf of a humanitarian association, whether international or national, official or unofficial, within the recipient community.

Moral harassment: repeated acts likely to lead to a deterioration in the working conditions of the person who is subjected to them, which may result in :

- An infringement of his rights and dignity ;
- An impairment of physical or mental health ;
- Or a threat to its professional development

Neglect: deliberate inattention or omission on the part of the caregiver to provide for the child's development in all areas, including health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter, and safe living conditions, within the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caregiver, which causes harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

Person under PUI's mandate: Any person to whom PUI or its collaborators provide any form of protection, assistance, service or other intervention. Persons directly and indirectly affected by PUI's interventions are included.

Physical Abuse: physical harm to a child from an interaction or lack of interaction that is reasonably under the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust.

Protection: all activities aimed at guaranteeing the fundamental rights of all individuals, in accordance with the spirit and the letter of the applicable legal texts, in particular international humanitarian law, human rights, and refugee law.

PUI collaborators: all members and adherents of the association, national, expatriates or headquarters employees, consultants, volunteers, hosted visitors, suppliers and service providers - in short, all natural or legal persons in contact with Première Urgence Internationale.

Sexual abuse: any sexual assault, including inappropriate gestures and contact, committed with force, coercion, or unequal power. The threat of such an act also constitutes sexual abuse.

Sexual exploitation: Abuse or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically - United Nations Secretary-General's bulletin (ST/SGB/2003/13).

Sexual harassment: remarks or behavior with a sexual connotation, imposed repeatedly, which violates dignity because of its humiliating or degrading nature, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive situation. Any form of serious pressure, even if not repeated, with the real or apparent aim of obtaining a sexual favor, for the benefit of the perpetrator or a third party, is considered sexual harassment.

Sex worker: generic term used internationally to designate people engaged in occupations or practices that involve sexual performance, which in most cases is a service in exchange for monetary compensation.