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Safe from the Start ReVisioned

USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) and the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) are launching *Safe from the Start ReVisioned*. This initiative demonstrates the United States' commitment to advance an approach in humanitarian response that promotes women's leadership, prioritizes support and advocacy for gender-based violence prevention response programming, and shifts funding, influence, and decision-making power to women and girls within humanitarian response systems.

WHY IT MATTERS

- Safe from the Start ReVisioned reinforces the Biden Administration's renewed commitments to gender equity and equality and the protection of women and girls.
- Through Safe from the Start ReVisioned, the United States Government (USG) demonstrates leadership in the global fight against GBV and strengthens our partnership with global partners and fellow donors to better address the needs of women and girls.
- Safe from the Start ReVisioned demonstrates the United States' commitment to ensuring humanitarian response is accountable to women and girls, and in particular ensuring they are free from the threat of GBV in emergencies.

SAFE FROM THE START REVISIONED OBJECTIVES

1. Increase accountability to all women and girls in emergencies.
2. Bring to scale effective GBV interventions at the field level—increasing the impact, number, and reach of quality, dedicated GBV prevention and response interventions in all types of emergencies.
3. Amplify GBV expertise. Scale existing capacity of organizations to prioritize, design, staff, implement, and coordinate GBV prevention and response programming.
4. Drive increased representation and leadership of women and girls, specifically women's organizations, in decision-making structures and the delivery of humanitarian aid.
5. Ensure that all humanitarian actors prioritize concrete actions to mitigate GBV risks and address the rights and unique needs of all women and girls.

(Left) Women, including survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), participate in skills building activities at a safe space in Nigeria. This includes soap making, knitting, vaseline making, literacy classes and recreational activities as a means of psychosocial support. Photo courtesy of a USAID partner.



A USAID/BHA partner provides humanitarian protection services in northern Syria. Photo courtesy of a USAID partner.

BACKGROUND

Humanitarian emergencies trigger and amplify critical protection risks. The risks of all forms of GBV increase exponentially in emergencies, such as strategic targeting of women and girls for sexual violence; intimate partner violence; early/forced marriage; denial of resources (including healthcare, food, or education); and forced sex in exchange for food, water, shelter, or other assistance. GBV consistently and undeniably occurs during all emergencies, from the earliest days of a crisis through decades of protracted displacement. However, the humanitarian community's GBV response has historically been inadequate; "too little, too late."

In 2013, BHA (then USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance) and PRM launched the original Safe from the Start initiative to ensure GBV is addressed from the outset of an emergency no matter the type—health emergency, natural disaster, or conflict. Safe from the Start has increased the quality and quantity of the USG's humanitarian GBV prevention and response funding. From Fiscal Year 2013–2023, the United States provided more than \$221 million in funding toward Safe from the Start through the joint efforts of BHA and PRM.

Safe from the Start propelled the USG and the humanitarian community forward, reinforcing humanitarian GBV programming as truly life-saving, time-bound, and urgent. Sadly, GBV needs continue to outpace us. In early 2021, BHA and PRM undertook an ambitious rewrite - informed by 10 multi-stakeholder consultations in three languages. The output—Safe from the Start ReVisioned—is an even bolder step forward.

WHAT IS NEW ABOUT SAFE FROM THE START REVISIONED

The original Safe from the Start initiative, which was launched in 2013, reinforced GBV programming as truly life-saving. Through Safe from the Start programming, the GBV community developed critical guidance and resources, including the GBV Accountability Framework and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Minimum Standards for Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies Programming, that provide a guide for humanitarian actors, from service providers to GBV coordinators and humanitarian leaders and donors, on the steps they can take to prevent, mitigate, and respond to GBV within their mandates.

While Safe from the Start contributed to significant progress, the humanitarian system still does not consistently prioritize or resource GBV programming from the onset of all emergencies. Safe from the Start ReVisioned builds on the success of the original initiative and outlines new, more ambitious goals to realize a systematic shift in humanitarian response architecture that centers around women and girls. Whereas the first phase emphasized the roles of individual actors, the new iteration focuses on collaboration across the humanitarian system to achieve mutual accountability. It also focuses on improving and expanding GBV programming and expertise, shifting power to crisis-affected women, and recognizing them as experts, service providers, and leaders.