

IPS 2-13 Sexual Assault Response Liaisons

Effective Date: September 1, 2013

Responsible Office: Office of Victim Advocacy and Office of Global Operations

New Interim Policy Statement

Issuance Memo (August 30, 2013)

1.0 Purpose

This Interim Policy Statement provides for the designation of Sexual Assault Response Liaisons (SARLs) at each Peace Corps post and sets out their duties and responsibilities.

As used in this Interim Policy Statement, the term Volunteers includes Trainees.

2.0 Authority

22 U.S.C. 2507b(a)(2)-(3)

3.0 Sexual Assault Response Liaisons

- (a) Each Peace Corps post must designate two SARLs. To the extent possible, SARLs should be full-time Peace Corps staff members who have volunteered to be SARLs. Such staff members will assume the voluntary duties of a SARL in addition to their regularly assigned duties.
- (b) If there are not enough candidates who meet the required standards from among full-time Peace Corps staff members who have volunteered to be SARLs, the Country Director may consider, in the order of preference:
 - 1. Designating Peace Corps staff members who have not volunteered to be SARLs; and
 - 2. Soliciting individuals (such as family members of U.S. embassy personnel or U.S. citizens residing in the host country) who are not Peace Corps staff members and are willing to serve as SARLs.

See IPS 2-13 *Sexual Assault Response Liaisons Procedures* for special criteria and operational standards applicable for such candidates.

3.1 Selection Criteria for SARL

- (a) In order to be selected by the Country Director to be a SARL, a candidate must meet the following requirements:

- (i) Be available to serve as a SARL preferably for a two-year period, but at a minimum for a one-year period. Have access to reliable transportation and means of communication to perform the duties of a SARL.
 - (ii) Be available for an initial one-week SARL training and for periodic refresher trainings.
- (b) In addition, the following qualifications should be taken into account in selecting a SARL:
- (i) Previous sexual assault and victim sensitivity training and experience.
 - (ii) Proficiency in English and understanding of local language and customs.
 - (iii) Interpersonal and communication skills.
 - (iv) Record of satisfactory performance in current position.
 - (v) Demonstration of compassion and empathy for people in difficult situations, regardless of the circumstances.
 - (vi) Ability to maintain confidentiality.
 - (vii) Such other factors as the Office of Victim Advocacy deems appropriate.
- (c) The following are ineligible to be designated as a SARL:
- (i) Peace Corps Medical Officers.
 - (ii) Safety and Security Coordinators.
 - (iii) Country Director.
 - (iv) Volunteers.

3.2 Selection Process

- (a) The Country Director leads the selection process for post SARLs and will invite applications from eligible Peace Corps staff members who express an interest in serving as a SARL. If there are not sufficient applications from Peace Corps staff members who meet the requirements set out in paragraphs 3.0(a) and 3.1(a), then the Country Director may solicit applications from persons identified in paragraph 3.0 (b).
- (b) The application of a candidate for a SARL position will provide background and other information that the Office of Victim Advocacy and the Office of Global Operations deem appropriate.
- (c) The Country Director reviews the applications, interviews candidates as appropriate and selects the most appropriate candidates based on the selection criteria in paragraph 3.1(b).
- (d) The Country Director forwards to the Office of Victim Advocacy the following: (i) a list of candidates considered and the ones selected; (ii) the applications of the selected candidates; and (iii) a confirmation that the selected candidates meet the selection criteria.
- (e) The Office of Victim Advocacy reviews the material submitted by the Country Director and advises if the Office of Victim Advocacy concurs with the selection(s).
- (f) When a selected candidate has successfully completed the initial SARL training, the candidate will be designated as a SARL for the post.
- (g) Either the Office of Victim Advocacy or the Country Director may, after consultation with the other party, terminate or suspend an individual's assignment as a SARL.

3.3 Duties of the SARL

SARLs are responsible for responding to Volunteers who report that they were sexually assaulted and for performing the following duties as indicated in the SARL statement of work (see Procedures):

- (a) Ensure, if needed, that the Volunteer is moved to a safe environment in accordance with paragraph 6.8 of MS 270.
- (b) Notify the Victim Advocate immediately when there has been a Restricted or Standard report of a sexual assault by a Volunteer.
- (c) When requested by the Volunteer, accompany the Volunteer through the in-country response to the sexual assault.
- (d) Maintain the strict confidentiality of information received in connection with a report of a sexual assault.

- (e) In accordance with, IPS 3-13 *Restricted Reporting*, perform the duties and adhere to the obligations assigned to SARLs as members of the Designated Staff.

A staff member serving as SARL may not perform SARL duties during the period that the staff member is Acting Country Director.

3.4 Responsibilities of the Office of Victim Advocacy in Relation to SARLs

The Office of Victim Advocacy is responsible for:

- (a) Establishing performance expectations for the position of SARL.
- (b) Providing technical oversight on the work performed by the SARLs and providing input on the performance of the SARLs in accordance with the duties of the SARL set forth in the statement of work.
- (c) Ensuring that SARLs receive comprehensive training on the Peace Corps policies and procedures for responding to reports of sexual assault.
- (d) Providing advice and resources for SARLs to perform their duties.
- (e) Collaborating with Country Directors to ensure that each post has selected and assigned two SARLs to respond to reports of sexual assault.

3.5 Responsibilities of Country Directors in Relation to SARLs

Each Country Director is responsible for:

- (a) Day-to-day management and supervision of each SARL and informing the Office of Victim Advocacy regarding the performance of each SARL; provided that the Country Director will not have direct observation of a SARL's performance in cases of Restricted Reporting.
- (b) Ensuring that the post always has a SARL on call to be available to respond to reports of sexual assault.
- (c) When a vacancy occurs with a SARL assignment, coordinating with the Office of Victim Advocacy to fill the vacancy as soon as possible.
- (d) Ensure to the extent practicable that other staff is available to carry out regular duties of the staff member who is performing SARL functions.

4.0 Procedures

Procedures implementing this Interim Policy Statement are contained in the IPS 2-13 *Sexual Assault Response Liaisons Procedures*, which must be approved by the Office of Victim Advocacy, the Office of Safety and Security, the Office of Global Operations, and the Office of the General Counsel.

5.0 Effective Date

This Interim Policy Statement shall take effect on September 1, 2013.