

MS 244 Sexual Assault Response Liaisons

Effective Date: March 29, 2019

Responsible Office: Office of Victim Advocacy, Office of Global Operations, and Office of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

Supersedes: IPS 2-13, 09/01/13

Issuance Memo (08/30/2013)

Issuance Memo (03/29/2019)

1.0 Purpose

This Manual Section 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 Manual Section, the term Volunteers includes Trainees.

2.0 Authority

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

3.0 Sexual Assault Response Liaisons

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. 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 should designate appropriate full-time Peace Corps staff members to be SARL 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:
- (1) Be available to serve as a SARL for a minimum of a two-year period. Have access to reliable transportation and means of communication to perform the duties of a SARL.
 - (2) Be available for an initial one-week SARL training, provisional training (if necessary) and periodic refresher trainings.
 - (3) Satisfactory performance in primary position.
 - (4) Ability to maintain confidentiality and respect the Volunteer's privacy.

- (5) Ability to follow instructions and procedures.
 - (6) Ability to respect the roles and responsibilities of others involved in the response and support process.
 - (7) Meeting the requirements for obtaining a passport and U.S. visa.
 - (8) No previous reports of sexual assault or domestic violence.
- (b) In addition, the following qualifications should be taken into account in selecting a SARL:
- (1) Previous sexual assault and victim sensitivity training and experience.
 - (2) Proficiency in English and understanding of local language and customs.
 - (3) Effective interpersonal and communication skills.
 - (4) Ability to interact with a victim in a non-judgmental manner.
 - (5) Ability to demonstrate compassion and empathy for people in difficult situations, regardless of the circumstances.
 - (6) Primary role has common non-emergency interaction with Volunteers.
 - (7) Such other factors as the Office of Victim Advocacy deems appropriate.
- (c) The following are ineligible to be designated as a SARL:
- (1) Peace Corps Medical Officers.
 - (2) Safety and Security Managers.
 - (3) Country Director.
 - (4) Volunteers.
 - (5) Any U.S. Direct Hire employee.

3.2 Selection Process

- (a) In coordination with the Office of Victim Advocacy, 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 sections 3.0 and 3.1(a), then the Country Director may designate a staff member as outlined in section 3.0.

- (b) The SARL application, developed by the Office of Victim Advocacy, 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.
- (d) The Country Director then forwards the complete application to the Office of Victim Advocacy.
- (e) The Office of Victim Advocacy reviews the application submitted by the Country Director and consults with the Office of Global Operations for final concurrence.
- (f) When a selected candidate has successfully completed the initial SARL training, the candidate will be designated as a SARL for the post.

3.3 Resignation or Termination of the SARL

- (a) SARLs are expected to serve the two-year time commitment, however a SARL may resign from the position at any point in time, for any reason, without any punitive or disciplinary measures being taken against them.
- (b) When deemed necessary, 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.

3.4 Duties of the SARL

A SARL is a member of their Peace Corps post's designated staff team whose primary purpose is to support Volunteers who report a sexual assault as more fully described in MS 243 *Responding to Sexual Assault*. SARLs are available to serve as first responders along with other members of the designated staff team. They can be contacted independently by a Volunteer, or their services can be requested through another designated staff person.

SARLs are responsible for responding to Volunteers who report that they were sexually assaulted and for performing the following duties:

- (a) Be on call 24/7 to Volunteers via the SARL duty phone (this duty is shared and coordinated by the SARLs at post).
- (b) If requested by the Volunteer, provide accompaniment to the Volunteer through the in-country response, which may include:
 - (1) Meetings with Peace Corps staff;
 - (2) Making a report to the local law enforcement and any additional meetings with police;

- (3) Assisting the PCMO in scheduling an appointment with a local medical provider for a sexual assault forensic examination (SAFE); and/or
- (4) Attending court proceedings.
- (c) Provide relevant information regarding access to services and support throughout the in-country response.
- (d) Inform the Office of Victim Advocacy as soon as possible upon being activated on a case.
- (e) If requested by the Volunteer, a SARL may accompany the Volunteer on medical evacuation to the United States.

3.5 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.
- (c) Providing relevant feedback concerning the performance of the SARL to the Country Director for consideration in their overall performance evaluations.
- (d) Developing and ensuring that SARLs receive comprehensive initial training as well as continuing education on the Peace Corps policies and procedures for responding to reports of sexual assault.
- (e) Providing advice and resources for SARLs to perform their duties.
- (f) Collaborating with Country Directors to ensure that each post has selected and assigned two SARLs to respond to reports of sexual assault.

3.6 Responsibilities of Country Directors in Relation to SARLs

Each Country Director is responsible for:

- (a) Day-to-day management and supervision of each SARL while operating in the role.
- (b) Ensuring SARLs are accessible to assist victims 24 hours a day, 7 days a week via a duty phone or duty number that is exclusively for SARL use.
- (c) Ensuring that the post always has a SARL on call to be available to respond to reports of sexual assault.
- (d) When a vacancy occurs with a SARL assignment, coordinating with the Office of Victim Advocacy to fill the vacancy as soon as possible.

- (e) 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 Effective Date

The effective date of this Manual Section is the date of issuance.