

# PSEA

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The Suffering Of Beneficiaries In Syria With  
**Exploitation and Abuse**

# Terminology



PSEA

An abbreviation of Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

SEA

An abbreviation of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

FMEE

An abbreviation of Financial and Material Extortion and Exploitation

# Methodology of the Study



## First- Objectives of the Study:

The study aims to reveal the extent of abuses and **(SEA)** and **(FMEE)** cases that Syrians are being subjected to during the registration process for the humanitarian aid, receiving it, or in exchange for access to public services, identifying the reactions of people who have already been subjected to **(SEA)** and **(FMEE)** cases and whether they have filed complaints against the perpetrators or not in addition to identifying the reasons for which they did not file complaints.

## Second- Scope of the Study:

Data collection process was carried out during **January 2021**, and it covered the countryside of Idlib Governorate and areas of the northern Aleppo countryside; in Idlib Governorate, it covered Silqeen, Al-Dana and Ma'rTamasreen areas, and in the northern Aleppo countryside, it covered Afrin and Azaz areas.

## Third- Sample of the Study:

During the study, **455** questionnaires were conducted with Syrians residing in the targeted areas, and the questionnaires were carried out in two methods; the first of which was conducting in-person interviews with the respondents, and the second method included sending a link for the online questionnaire to respondents and the aim of adopting the second method was to find out whether respondents prefer to speak about the **(SEA)** cases or the **(FMEE)** cases they were subjected to without exposing their identities. It should be noted that in the in-person interviews some of the questionnaires were carried out with respondents who formerly knew the enumerators or have friendship or kinship relations with them, while the other questionnaires were carried out with people who do not know the enumerators at all in order to know if respondents prefer to speak about the cases of exploitation or extortion to which they have been subjected to persons they are familiar with or to persons they are unfamiliar with.



# Types

of exploitation or extortion to which the participants or their family members were subjected

about a third of the study participants said that they or one of their family members had been subjected to **(SEA)** or **(FMEE)** cases while registering for humanitarian aid or public services or while receiving it. **(FMEE)** cases constitute **72%** of the total exploitation and extortion that participants said they were subjected to, and these cases include:

- a)** Requesting material or in-kind benefit in exchange for receiving the service or the humanitarian aid.
- b)** Requesting financial benefit.
- c)** Requesting a particular service from the beneficiary in exchange for receiving humanitarian aid or public services.

While the percentage of **(SEA)** cases constitute **23%** of the mentioned exploitation and extortion cases, and they include:

- a)** Verbal harassment.
- b)** Physical harassment.
- c)** Request for sexual acts in exchange for receiving humanitarian aid or public services.

**It should be noted here that 7%** of respondents who aid that they or one of their family members were subjected to **(SEA)** or **(FMEE)** cases said that camp managements or local councils of the towns and villages in which these camps exist receive a portion of the humanitarian aid provided for the camps and threaten to deprive all beneficiaries living in the camp from aid if they do not get this portion while residents of one village reported that the local council in that village had registered lists of beneficiaries in order to receive humanitarian aid, while at the time of distribution some of this aid was given to other people who are not registered in the lists, which caused depriving the registered beneficiaries from this aid.



# Types

of cases people were subjected to

27%

Requesting material or in-kind benefit

Requesting financial benefit in exchange for the aid or the service

25.5%

19%

Requesting a certain service or favor from the beneficiary in exchange for the aid or the service

Verbal harassment

14.6%

3.6%

Request for sexual acts in exchange for receiving humanitarian aid or public services

Physical harassment including any sexual acts like touching or other acts

3.6%

6.6%

Other

# Characteristics

of people who were subjected to (SEA) and (FMEE) cases

The results of the study showed that the percentage of females who were subjected to (SEA) cases is higher than that of males, as the percentage of females who said that they were subjected to such cases was **40.8%**, while this percentage was **11.3%** among males.

## Cases

of exploitation or extortion



Requesting material or in-kind benefit

18.4%

31.8%

Requesting financial benefit

24.5%

26.1%

Requesting a certain service or favor

16.3%

20.5%

Verbal harassment

22.4%

10.2%

Request for sexual acts

10.2%

0.0%

Physical harassment such as touching

8.2%

1.1%

Other

0.0%

10.2%

# Some

of the most important  
key findings of the study

There were three male beneficiaries who are under **18 years** old who were subjected to (**FMEE**) cases, and two female beneficiaries who are under **18 years** old who were subjected to (**SEA**) cases, and below are the details of the cases they were subjected to

**1-An 11-year-old** male child was subjected to a request for financial benefit by a humanitarian organization employee in exchange for medical care services, which are supposed to be free because the hospital is supported by that organization.

**2-A 17-year-old** male beneficiary was subjected to a request for financial benefit by a humanitarian organization employee in exchange for registration for attending capacity building or training courses.

**3-A 15-year-old** male beneficiary was subjected to a request for a service by a camp management employee in exchange for registration for receiving food aid.

**4-A 17-year-old** female beneficiary was subjected to verbal harassment by a local council employee when she was trying to register for receiving non-food aid.

**5-A 15-year-old** female beneficiary was subjected to verbal harassment by a camp management employee when she was trying to access a public service from an official department.

## Two females

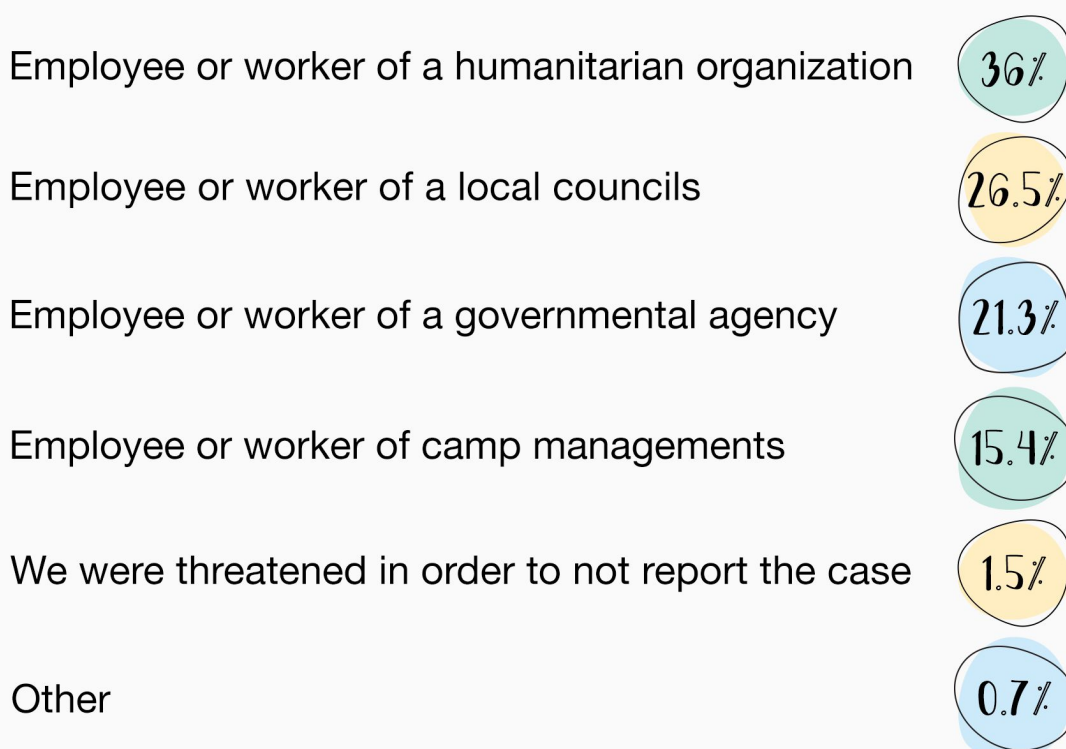
who are under 18 years old were subjected to verbal harassment, one of them was subjected to it when she was trying to get humanitarian aid, while the other was subjected when she was trying to access a public service from an official department



## Capacities and positions of perpetrators of (SEA) and (FMEE) cases

The highest percentage of perpetrators of (SEA) and (FMEE) cases mentioned in the study are humanitarian organizations employees, followed by employees or workers of local councils, then employees or workers of governmental agencies and camp managements. It should be noted that a female participant said that she was subjected to a (FMEE) case, which included a request for material benefit in exchange for registering or receiving food aid by a civilian residing in the camp which means that in some of exploitation or extortion cases, the exploitation may not be directly practiced by the employee or worker of the organizations or administrative authorities, but some of these employees may seek the help of civilian people who do not have an official job position to request the benefit from the beneficiary on their behalf in order not to hold the exploiter accountable directly.

### Capacity of the perpetrator



# Reactions

of people who were subjected to (FMEE) or (SEA) cases

Having asked the study participants who themselves or any of their family members were subjected to extortion or exploitation who are **137** participants whether they filed a complaint about the cases or not, **10** of them said that they did, as **seven** of them said that they filed their complaints to the management of the institution where the perpetrator of the case works, and one respondent said that he filed his complaint to the management of the donor entity which fund the employer of the perpetrator of the case, another respondent said that he had filed his complaint to the security-keeping entities in his area of residence, and the tenth participant said that he filed his complaint to an informal entity (Council of IDPs in Deir Ez-Zor).

## Did you file a complaint or report the case

Yes

7.4%

No

92.6%

## Dealing with the complaints

In general, the study showed that the level of concern of the entities to which complaints were filed about these complaints and dealing with them was low; as six of the participants who filed complaints about the cases they were subjected to said that their complaints were handled with low concern by the bodies they filed it to, while three complainants said that their complaints were handled with average concern, and only one complainant said that his complaint was handled with great concern.

As for the results of these complaints, we find that the perpetrators of the **(SEA)** or the **(FMEE)** cases were not punished except in one case; which the complainant said that his complaint that he filed to the management of the body were the perpetrator works was handled with great concern, this case included a request for material or in-kind benefit from the beneficiary by an employee or a worker of the local council in exchange for registering for receiving food aid, while the complaints that were rejected without being examined were three complaints which is the same number of complaints that were examined and eventually rejected, and in two cases, the complaints were examined and proved, however the bodies that received the complaints did not take any action against the perpetrator, and one respondent said that his complaint was completely ignored.

### **Three of the filed complaints**

were rejected without being examined, and two other complaints were examined and proved however, the bodies that received the complaints did not take any action against the perpetrator



# Reasons

## of not filing complaints

As mentioned earlier, the vast majority of the participants (**93%**) who said that they or one of their family members were subjected to (**SEA**) OR (**FMEE**) cases did not file complaints about what they were subjected to, and the reasons for not filing complaints vary, as at the forefront of which is lack of belief in complaints usefulness, followed by fear of being deprived of aid, and about a quarter of them said that they did not know what should they do, and **11%** said that they feared that the confidentiality of the information of the complainant will not be maintained by the entity they will file complaints to, and people who selected the option **OTHER** said that they were afraid of being prosecuted by local authorities or security entities if they report the case they were subjected to, in addition to the fear of corruption of employees who will receive complaints.

## Reasons of not filing complaints

We did not believe that filing a complaint will have a result

40.1%

We feared being deprived of aid

31.5%

We did not know what to do

23.6%

We feared that the confidentiality of the case will not be maintained

11%

We received threats that prevented us from filing complaints

1.5%

Other

3.9%

# Key Findings

**1-** Approximately one third of the study participants said that they or one of their family members had been subjected to **(SEA)** or **(FMEE)** cases.

**2-** Approximately three-quarters of these cases are **(FMEE)** cases which included a request for an in-kind or financial benefit or a particular service from the beneficiary in exchange for accessing humanitarian aid or public services, while the percentage of **(SEA)** cases was about one-quarter of the cases, including verbal or physical harassment and requesting sexual acts.

**3-(40.8%)** of the cases to which female participants were subjected were **(SEA)** cases.

**4-** Humanitarian organizations employees are the perpetrators of most of the **(SEA)** and **(FMEE)** cases at **36%**, followed by employees or workers of local councils at **26%**, in addition to employees or workers of governmental agencies and camp managements officials.

**5-** Only **10** people of the total number of the participants who were subjected to **(SEA)** or **(FMEE)** cases said that they filed complaints, constituting **7%**.

**6-** Six of the filed complaints received a low level of concern, while three complaints received an average level of concern, and only one complaint was met with a great concern.

**7-** Regarding the results of the complaints, three respondents said that their complaints were rejected without being examined, three other respondents also said that their complaints were rejected after being examined, and two respondents said that their complaints were examined and proved, however the entities which received the complaints did not take any action, and the perpetrator of the case was punished in only one of the filed complaints, while one of the cases was completely ignored.

**8-(41%)** of respondents who did not file complaints attributed it to the fact that they were not convinced of its usefulness, and **31%** of them said that they feared being deprived of aid, and about a quarter of them did not know what to do.



## Most important recommendations



**1-**Working to create a monitoring, evaluation and follow-up mechanism for public services or humanitarian aid providers which ensures that beneficiaries are more protected from **(SEA)** and **(FMEE)** cases.

**2-**Working to increase beneficiaries' awareness of the necessity of reporting cases they are subjected to, and to ensure that the concerned authorities will maintain the confidentiality of their information, this can be done through holding awareness sessions to explain the mechanism of filing complaints and providing them with communication info of **(PSEA)** Network through posters hanged in aid distributing points and the offices of public services providers.

**3-**Activating the administrative punishments for perpetrators of **(SEA)** and **(FMEE)** cases, such as discharge, fines, or temporary suspension of employment contracts, and preventing the cover-up of the employing entities of perpetrators of such cases for them by adopting a third-party monitoring mechanism on service and aid projects.



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