

Closing the gap: Strengthening gender equality and protection from SGBV in disasters through law and policy

**Thematic discussion on Tuesday 7 November, 10:00-12:30
at the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU,
Square de Meeûs 30, 1000 Brussels**

Hosted by
Enrique Guerrero Salom, Member of the European Parliament (MEP),
Permanent Rapporteur for Humanitarian Aid

and co-organised by
the Red Cross EU Office



It is widely acknowledged that disasters affect women, men, boys, and girls in different ways. Socio-economic conditions, traditional practices, and cultural beliefs, often mean that women and their children are disproportionately affected; facing increased risk of death, injury, loss of livelihoods and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). In many contexts, gender inequality and discrimination limit women and girls' access to resources and influence over decisions governing their lives. Attention to gender issues and SGBV in disaster risk management are therefore critical to building disaster resilience and creating safer and more inclusive environments.

Engaging decision-makers and operational actors on this topic is essential to ensuring that national legal frameworks are developed and effectively implemented to tackle the specific challenges that women and girls face in disasters. Research carried out by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) shows that laws can play a significant role in addressing gender inequality and SGBV in disasters. Yet, while many

countries have national legislation related both to gender and to disasters, and a few refer to gender in their national disaster policies, none of their disaster plans include arrangements for preventing and dealing with issues like SGBV. This further contributes to the generally low levels of awareness of SGBV in disasters.

In 2015, state parties to the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent adopted Resolution 3 on 'Sexual and gender-based violence: Joint action on prevention and response' (32IC/15/3). In addition, EU Member States signed a joint pledge at the conference to address SGBV in disasters.

To better understand the difficulties that women and girls face in disasters, with a focus on SGBV prevention and response, the IFRC launched a new research project in 2016 which specifically considers the role law and policy can play in addressing this issue. This research has included a global desk review and country case studies in Zimbabwe, Ecuador, and Nepal to assess the effectiveness of the relevant national legal frameworks.

The event will provide a forum to share the outcomes of this research and discuss how to strengthen law and policy to address gender inequality and SGBV in disasters. Gathering key stakeholders from the EU institutions, the humanitarian and developments sectors, and civil society, it seeks to raise awareness and ultimately contribute to producing better outcomes for women, children, and affected communities.

Agenda

10:00 *Coffee and registration*

10:30 *Welcome*

Mikael Lindvall, Ambassador, Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU
Enrique Guerrero Salom, MEP, Permanent Rapporteur for Humanitarian Aid
Denis Haveaux, Director, Red Cross EU Office

10:50 *Keynote speech: Call to action*, **Jean-Louis de Brouwer**, Director, European Commission, Humanitarian Aid & Civil Protection (DG ECHO)

11:10 *Effective law and policy for addressing gender inequality and SGBV in disasters: an overview and key findings of IFRC research*, **Lucia Cipullo**, Senior Legislative Advocacy Officer, IFRC

11:30 *The Gender Inequality of Risk ('GIR') and Promoting Community Resilience to Natural Hazards in a Changing Climate: the role of law and policy*, **Dagmar Schumacher**, Director of the UN Women Brussels Office

11:45 *Red Cross Red Crescent perspective, and commitment to addressing gender inequality and SGBV in disasters*, **Hanna Persson**, Gender Advisor, Swedish Red Cross

12:00 *Questions and answers*

12:15 *Concluding remarks* by **Enrique Guerrero Salom**, MEP, Permanent Rapporteur for Humanitarian Aid

To register, please visit: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/closing-the-gap-strengthening-gender-equality-and-protection-in-disasters-tickets-37871997163>.

The panel debate will be followed by the workshop **Gender, Diversity and SGBV in Humanitarian Assistance** on 8 November, 09:00-17:00 at the Red Cross EU Office, Brussels. To learn more, please [email](#) Salla Himberg.