



INTER-AGENCY WORKING GROUP
ON REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IN CRISES

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR **SAFE ABORTION CARE** FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN CRISES

IAWG Safe Abortion Care Sub-Working Group

WHAT DO WE STAND FOR?

1. Access to safe abortion for all women and adolescent girls in crisis is a human right.

The right to access a safe and legal abortion is grounded in the realization of other core human rights, including the right to life, health, equality, privacy, self-determination, bodily integrity, and freedom from inhuman or degrading treatment and discrimination, as well as the right to benefit from scientific progress. Numerous international and regional human rights instruments have upheld a women's right to safe and legal abortion.

2. Safe abortion care is an evidence-based intervention that prevents maternal mortality and morbidity.

Unsafe abortion is a major cause of maternal mortality. For every woman or adolescent girl who dies from unsafe abortion, many more are left with serious injuries or permanent disabilities, including infertility. These deaths, injuries and disabilities can be almost entirely prevented by ensuring access to safe abortion care services. Access to safe abortion care is considered part of a comprehensive package of sexual, reproductive and maternal health interventions by key health agencies and organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations.

3. Access to high-quality safe abortion care for all women and adolescent girls contributes to gender equality and social justice.

Enabling women and adolescent girls to make decisions about their own bodies and lives, including exercising their sexual and reproductive rights, is linked to their improvements in social status, economic opportunity and gender equity.

4. A core package of evidence-based safe abortion services should be made available to displaced women and adolescent girls in all crisis situations.

Safe abortion services must be accessible, adequate, and available at any time during displacement, of good quality, without discrimination, violence or coercion. Health care providers in crisis should be trained to provide high-quality, rights-based safe abortion services, context-relevant and evidence-based equipment and medication should be made available in crisis, and crisis-affected populations should be made aware of the types of available abortion services and under what conditions these services can be provided.