
IRC Iraq Country Director

Job Description

BACKGROUND

Founded in 1933, the International Rescue Committee is a prominent international organization providing humanitarian assistance, rehabilitation, protection, post-conflict development, resettlement services and advocacy for those uprooted or affected by violent conflict and oppression. Working in Iraq in close coordination with the humanitarian community, IRC currently addresses the needs of war-affected Iraqi internally displaced persons (IDPs), Iraqi refugee returnees and Syrian refugees by providing assistance in education, protection monitoring, women's protection and empowerment, child protection, economic relief and development. IRC operates throughout Iraq, with the main office in Erbil and field offices in Najaf, Karbala, Baghdad, Tikrit, Sulimaniya and Dohuk, as well as in Derek, in northeast Syria. IRC Iraq's current portfolio amounts to \$33M, with further growth anticipated.

SCOPE OF WORK

The Country Director for Iraq is responsible for overall leadership and supervisory management of IRC offices and operations in the country, including stewardship of resources, staff safety and security, program quality and accountability, and performance management. The Country Director is IRC's principal representative to the Iraqi and Kurdistan Region of Iraq governments, donors, international organizations, other NGOs and the media. The Country Director is expected to respond effectively to a constantly changing environment with responsive and effective humanitarian programs implemented directly and with Iraqi partner organizations. The Country Director will lead country program staff in pursuing the outcomes identified in the strategy action plan for 2016-2020, bringing them together to deliver high-quality, cost-effective programming results at high levels of accountability.

Success in this position requires an individual with exemplary leadership abilities who deploys strong communications and interpersonal skills effectively, both internally and externally. The successful candidate will enjoy developing networks to build partnerships and diversify program resources. Given the operating environment, the Country Director is expected to be attentive to risk management. S/he will be directly responsible for the overall coordination and strategic direction of the country program; providing oversight and coaching for directly supervised senior managers; leading country program teams to identify, design and deliver responsive, high-quality programs; ensuring efficient management of public grants and private funds for results, compliance and focused, timely reporting; and oversight of financial management and compliance systems.

Based in Erbil, the Country Director oversees all IRC operations throughout Iraq and in northeastern Syria. Reporting to the Regional Director, this position receives support from regional and headquarters staff in the areas of program quality, new business development, safety and security management, finance, operations management, and external affairs. The Country Director is additionally expected to actively participate in defining the IRC's public advocacy positions. The Country Director directly supervises six positions in a country program of approximately 700 staff. This position is limited accompanied (partners only) and requires extensive in-country, including to Baghdad, and occasional regional travel.

The overall security situation in Iraq and northeastern Syria is dynamic, and varies from one operating area to another. Security in Erbil is relatively stable with few immediate security threats. In south central Iraq, the security environment is unpredictable due to ongoing conflict, weak governance, sectarian

violence. Hassakeh province in northeastern Syria remains small pocket of stability in a very unpredictable conflict.

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership and Representation

- Lead the country program by maintaining open and professional relations with colleagues, promoting a strong team spirit and providing guidance, oversight and resources to enable staff to perform successfully.
- Develop and carry out strategies that result in strong representation with: Iraqi and KRI Government authorities at various levels; donors including DFID, BPRM, SIDA, GIZ, OFDA and ECHO; UN and other international organizations; international and local NGOs; and networks such as NCCI and INSO Forum.
- Ensure that IRC remains a partner of choice for major international donors.
- Develop and maintain a high level of understanding of donor priorities and planned funding.
- Initiate and sustain strong, mutually beneficial and authentic partnerships with Iraqi organizations.
- Seek out and pursue opportunities to raise the profile of the work of the IRC and its partners in Iraq and NE Syria, as well as the lives and the needs of the people the IRC seeks to serve.
- Play a leadership role in efforts to improve humanitarian response coordination and play an active role in the Humanitarian Country Team.
- Lead country program collaboration with colleagues in the IRC's Syria Regional Response to deliver regional programming and advocacy.

Strategic Direction, Program Quality and Growth

- Set the strategic vision and direction of the country program to serve more people with responsive, high-quality programming, and secure the resources necessary to do so.
- Align programming to the country program strategy action plan, sectoral expertise and technical standards.
- Ensure program quality through consistent use throughout the country program of: rigorous assessment, design, and proposal development and review processes; comprehensive monitoring and evaluation, accountability and learning systems; staff development investments; and partner organization capacity strengthening.
- Remain current on national and regional issues impacting the country program and partners, and develop responsive strategies to ensure IRC's mission can be carried out appropriately in rapidly changing contexts.
- Ensure country program alignment with and involvement in meeting regional objectives.
- Identify opportunities for appropriate expansion and growth of programs, supported by the acquisition and investment of human resources.
- Ensure timely submission of competitive, responsive and high-quality proposals, and support colleagues in negotiations with donors.

Safety and Security Management

- Take primary responsibility for overall management of safety and security for the country program.
- Oversee the management of all security issues, including appropriate response to emergency situations as they arise.

- Create and maintain a culture of safety and security throughout the country program, including trainings and briefings that prepare all country program staff for security incident prevention and response.
- Keep security, evacuation and contingency plans current and easily accessible to country program staff.
- Maintain close coordination and communication with the Regional Safety and Security Advisor on safety and security concerns and evolving issues that could adversely affect IRC staff or operations.

Staff Performance Management and Development

- Supervise and mentor direct-report staff, including communicating clear expectations, setting performance objectives, providing regular and timely performance feedback, and leading documented semi-annual performance reviews.
- Provide constructive feedback and counsel on appropriate career paths and professional development for IRC staff.
- Oversee the management, coaching and development of national and international staff to build a cadre of skilled, committed and motivated personnel.
- Pursue nationalization of senior management positions.
- Promote and monitor staff care and well-being. Model healthy work-life balance practices. Support appropriate interventions in response to identified staff care needs of both national and international staff.
- Offer leadership support for successful adherence by all staff to IRC's Global HR Operating Policies and Procedures.
- Work with regional HR staff to identify and implement recruitment and retention strategies.
- Undertake regular reviews of labor and salary markets in Iraq for the purpose of enhancing the competitiveness of the IRC's overall compensation package for national staff.

Stewardship and Operational Management

- Drive operational excellence to achieve optimal efficiency and cost-effectiveness in all functions and operations of the country program.
- Oversee the deployment and utilization of financial and operational policies, procedures, and systems to deliver compliance with IRC and donor requirements.
- Ensure responsiveness and appropriate levels of in-person and remote support to all offices, especially in the areas of HR, finance and supply chain.
- Provide timely and effective oversight of the Iraq country program's financial position.
- Maintain effective and coordinated budget monitoring processes for grant funds and discretionary funds.
- Seek opportunities to introduce efficiencies and eliminate redundancies in existing business processes.

Communications

- Model and encourage active practice of the principles of the "IRC Way - Global Standards for Professional Conduct" throughout the Iraq country program.
- Maintain a healthy and empowering office environment that encourages open, honest and productive communication among IRC staff and with partner organizations.

- Maintain open communications with regional management staff, regional technical advisors, and HQ departmental staff.

Supervisory Responsibilities:

6 direct reports, including the Deputy Directors for Programs, Operations and Cross-Border Programs, Finance Controller, Advocacy Advisor and HR Coordinator.

Professional Standards

The IRC and IRC staff must adhere to the values and principles outlined in IRC Way - Global Standards for Professional Conduct. These are Integrity, Service, and Accountability. In accordance with these values, the IRC operates and enforces policies on Beneficiary Protection from Exploitation and Abuse, Child Safeguarding, Anti-Workplace Harassment, Fiscal Integrity, and Anti-Retaliation.

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

- Graduate degree in a relevant field
- At least ten years of progressively responsible international work experience, including at least three years in a leadership role at the Country Director level of multi-site, multi-sectoral operations in a complex operating environment
- Experience of building personal networks at a senior level, resulting in securing new opportunities for the organization
- Demonstrated successful leadership and management experience with a multi-disciplinary team in a cross-cultural setting, including active mentoring and coaching
- Proven experience delivering appropriate levels oversight of a portfolio consisting of a variety of complex, high-value donor-funded projects
- Extensive representation and fundraising success, including prior experience with UN, European, US and international donors
- Experience of managing security in a complex and rapidly changing security context
- Proven ability to negotiate and work with partner organizations. Experience with organizational capacity strengthening and partnership building helpful
- Demonstrated strong budget and fiscal oversight capacities
- Established capacity to deal with ambiguity in stressful situations
- Ability to respond to multiple priorities in a timely manner, producing high-quality outcomes
- A keen understanding of political complexities in the Middle East region
- Arabic language skills a definite advantage
- Ability to work and live in a sometimes insecure environment while maintaining a positive attitude

This position is based in Erbil and is limited accompanied (partner only), with an estimated 35% of the Country Director's time spent in other locations in Iraq/NE Syria and the region. Travel to Baghdad is required, security permitting.