



IRC Code of Conduct on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises

In accordance with the mission and practice of the International Rescue Committee, Inc. (“IRC”) and principles of international law and codes of conduct, all IRC humanitarian staff, including both international and national, regular full and part time staff, interns, contractors, and volunteers (“IRC humanitarian workers”), are responsible for promoting respect for fundamental human rights, social justice, human dignity, and respect for the equal rights of men, women, and children. While respecting the dignity and worth of every individual, the IRC humanitarian worker will treat all persons equally without distinction whatsoever of race, gender, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, language, marital status, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status, disability, political conviction, or any other distinguishing feature.

IRC humanitarian workers recognize that certain international standards of behavior must be upheld and that they take precedence over local and national cultural practices. While respecting and adhering to these broader frameworks of behavior, IRC specifically requires that IRC humanitarian workers adhere to the following Code of Conduct.

Commitment to IRC Code of Conduct

1. An IRC humanitarian worker will always treat all persons with respect and courtesy in accordance with applicable international and national conventions and standards of behavior.
2. An IRC humanitarian worker will never commit any act that could result in physical, sexual or psychological harm to the beneficiaries we serve.
3. An IRC humanitarian worker will not condone or participate in corrupt activities or illegal activities.
4. IRC and IRC humanitarian workers recognize the inherent unequal power dynamic and the resulting potential for exploitation inherent in humanitarian aid work, and that such exploitation undermines the credibility of humanitarian work and severely damages victims of these exploitive acts and their families and communities. For this reason, IRC humanitarian workers are prohibited from engaging in sexual relationships with beneficiaries¹. Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is strictly prohibited.
5. An IRC humanitarian worker must never abuse his or her power or position in the delivery of humanitarian assistance, neither through withholding assistance nor by giving preferential treatment including requests/demands for sexual favors or acts.
6. It is expected of all IRC humanitarian workers to uphold the highest ethical standard of integrity, accountability and transparency in the delivery of goods and services while executing the responsibilities of their position.
7. An IRC humanitarian worker has the responsibility to report any known or suspected cases of alleged misconduct against beneficiaries to senior management (as outlined in the reporting pathway) immediately. Strict confidentiality must be maintained to protect all individuals involved.

¹ *Different considerations will arise regarding the enforcement of some of these principles for humanitarian workers hired from the beneficiary community. While sexual exploitation and abuse and the misuse of humanitarian assistance will always be prohibited, discretion may be used in the application of the principles regarding sexual relationships for this category of humanitarian worker.*