

CODE OF CONDUCT

For the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

This Code of Conduct applies to all Mercy Hands' Staff and partners, including Implementing Partners, Contractors, Sub-Contractors, Day Labors, and Volunteers. This Code of Conduct is based on the Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse ([ST/SGB/2003/13](#)).

Humanitarian conditions particularly increase the frequency and level of Gender Based Violence for women, girls and other at-risk groups¹, who often face greater obstacles in claiming their rights. The weakening of social and legal protections promotes a culture of impunity for perpetrators and increases the likelihood that survivors will not seek care and support. Consequently:

I, _____, understand that I have duty of care to beneficiaries and a responsibility to ensure that affected women, girls, boys, and men are treated with dignity and respect.

I commit to uphold the highest standards of professional and personal conduct, even when I am off duty or away from my duty station.

I understand that sexual exploitation and abuse² is unacceptable behavior and jeopardizes the credibility and reputation of all humanitarian organizations in Iraq.

In order to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, I commit to respect the six core principles outlined in the Secretary-General's Bulletin:

- I. Sexual exploitation and abuse is **serious misconduct** and grounds for **disciplinary measures**, including summary dismissal.
- II. Sexual activity with **children** (persons under the age of 18) is **prohibited**, regardless of the age of majority or local age of consent. Mistaken belief in the age of the child is not a defence.
- III. Exchange of **money, employment, goods or services for sex**, including any humiliating, degrading, or exploitive behavior is **prohibited**.
- IV. Sexual relationships between staff and beneficiaries of assistance are **prohibited** since they are based on unequal power dynamics, and grounds for **disciplinary measures**, including dismissal.
- V. Workers providing assistance to beneficiaries are obliged to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse. Managers at all levels have an additional responsibility to do so.
- VI. Where an aid worker or staff member has **concerns or suspicions** regarding sexual exploitation or abuse by an aid worker he/she **must report** such concerns. In Iraq, a confidential complaint can be made to Mercy Hands by or on behalf of a survivor through any of the following ways:

¹ Other at-risk groups include Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual and Intersex (LGBTI) persons, people living with disabilities, and ethnic and religious minorities. For a summary of at-risk groups refer to the "Guidelines for Integrating Gender Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Actions 2015," Global Protection Cluster.

² **Sexual Exploitation** is any actual or attempted abuse of a person in a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

Sexual Abuse is the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

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- A complaint can be submitted via this online form (preferred for anonymous complaints): <https://www.mercyhands.org/complaintform>
- Call Mercy Hands Hotline: +964 790 116 6147
- Directly contacting Mercy Hands' **PSEA Focal Point: Zina Attar, General Administrator** (zina.attar@mercyhands.org | +964 770 662 4003)
- The free helpline of the **UN IDP Call Centre: 800 69999**

By signing this Code of Conduct, I hereby agree to uphold its principles to the best of my ability at all times.

Name: _____ **Signature:** _____

Date: _____ **Title:** _____

Department/Program: _____

Reviewed and approved by the Board
date: July 2020



Khaldoon Al-Moosawi

Chairman Board of Directors