

Volunteer Medical Missions Orientation

MANUAL





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Introduction

The Palestine Children's Relief Fund is a US-registered non-profit organization established in 1991 to provide medical care, including surgery, for children in the Middle East, regardless of their nationality, gender, race, religion, or ethnicity. The purpose of this manual is to provide basic social, cultural, administrative, and medical information for medical volunteers who come to the West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, Jordan, or Lebanon through the support and arrangements of the PCRF.

Medical Missions

Our Purpose

The PCRF has two main objectives in sponsoring medical missions to the Middle East:

- To provide clinical care for patients who cannot get adequate treatment within the local healthcare system, due to a lack of materials, specialists, or resources.
- To provide training and experience for local healthcare providers, with the long-term objective of creating self-sufficient services in the various sub-specialties in which we work.



Logistics

We structure our medical missions through the management of a Medical Missions Coordinator, who oversees the preparation of volunteers coming from abroad. Once volunteer CVs are submitted and approved by our Medical Advisory Board and the Ministry of Health, invitations are provided, and logistical arrangements are then made.

Travel logistics will be done by the PCRF's main office. If you wish to make your own arrangements, that must be coordinated beforehand with the PCRF medical missions coordinator. Tickets for reimbursement should not be purchased without prior approval from our main office. As a charity with limited resources, we provide economy/coach class tickets for our volunteers. Any upgrade to a higher class, or added locations, or trip extensions are the responsibility of the volunteer. Volunteers making their own arrangements will be reimbursed at the going rate of an economy class ticket.

The PCRF provides travel insurance through The First Health Network Insurance for all our volunteers for the duration of their medical mission, protecting against hospitalization due to illness or injury and for emergency medical evacuation. Volunteers are free to arrange additional or alternate coverage at their own expense.



Operations

The schedule for most of our medical missions is to arrive into the country on Friday. A taxi or van will be waiting to pick you up at the airport. On Saturday morning, volunteers will meet with the local PCRF staff, tour the hospital, meet the local medical staff and screen patients that volunteers select from our field work. We try to finish early on the first day, so that you can get some rest. Surgery generally starts on Sunday and is completed by Thursday afternoon. On Friday morning volunteers make their final rounds at the hospital, transfer care of their patients back to their local colleagues and then make tourist trips. The PCRF will arrange and cover a one-night hotel stay in Jerusalem or Bethlehem for sightseeing. Any longer stay is the responsibility of the volunteer.

Food and beverage: The PCRF will provide meals during your stay, either at the hotel or in restaurants. However, as a charity, we cannot pay for alcoholic drinks or tobacco products. You are free to purchase those at your own expense.

Visas: You will be provided a three-month tourist visa when you enter Ben Gurion Airport passport control or the Allenby Bridge crossing from Jordan. You no longer have to have your passport stamped but can request a visa card to be issued for you at the border. At the Gaza border.

Medical Supplies: We often ask our volunteers to hand-carry medical supplies that they may need on their mission. You can hand-carry smaller medical supplies and materials in your luggage and not declare it, but for medical equipment that is very expensive or bulky it is necessary to submit an inventory to the PCRF one month before your mission, so that we can work on clearing it through customs. This is a long and detailed process, so please note that not following this timeline generally means we cannot get customs clearance.

Extra Baggage: You can try to get the airlines to waive an extra bag fee if it is for materials or supplies related to the mission or something that we request that you carry on behalf of the organization. However, if you are not able to get a waiver, we ask that you keep any documentation of payment, and we will reimburse you from our main office.

Other expenses: PCRF is committed to cover other expenses like visa fees and any COVID tests that might be needed.

PCRF Staff

The PCRF is a humanitarian organization of many dedicated, experienced social workers, program coordinators, secretaries, and other professionals ready to make your trip a safe and fruitful one. We encourage you always to ask your mission coordinator, who will provide your team a cell phone for local use, for anything you need. These are the main contacts related to your mission:

Name	Mobile	Email	Title
Lubna Musa	+972599536296	l.musa@pcrf.net	Regional Chief Executive Officer of Palestine
Suhail Flaifi	+970599418680 +201002732175	s.flaiifi@pcrf.net	Regional Medical Mission Manager
Karima Toman	+201500363385	k.toman@pcrf.net	Regional Medical Mission Coordinator
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Mohammad El Hajj	+96181709083	m.alhajj@pcrf.net	Office Manager - Lebanon
Khalid Shehabi	+970 593 359 907	k.shehabi@pcrf.net	Field Medical Mission Coordinator for Gaza
Hana Abdeen Sakhel	+970 595 310 611	h.abdeen@pcrf.net	Medical Mission Supervisor for the West Bank

Social Interaction and Dress

While Palestine, Jordan and, Lebanon are conservative areas, the people there are very hospitable and generous. You will find many people interested in chatting about nearly every subject imaginable, most particularly politics and religion. This is often out of curiosity and friendliness, not to cause conflict or tension. If you are uncomfortable with such subjects, you are free to say so. However, it would be a good idea to do some advanced background reading on the basic history and current politics of the Middle East, as there is a lot to learn from such exchanges.

For the dress, women volunteer members of PCRF missions need not cover their hair. However, short skirts, tank tops, shorts, and sleeveless shirts are inappropriate clothing; the latter three even for men. Please try to conceal any tattoos that might be considered offensive in a conservative society.

The PCRF will provide you with a volunteer vest that we prefer you to wear during your time in the hospital and to and from work. It helps to let the community know that you are there helping people and spreads the word about our work. Each volunteer also receives a PCRF surgical cap. The head of the mission will have a local mobile during the mission. Transportation is our responsibility.

Summary

Our objective is to provide the most professional, high-quality medical care for needy Arab children who cannot get their required treatment locally. We also believe in sharing knowledge, training local personnel, and building capacity. We want to make your mission as safe and productive as possible. We appreciate any feedback that you believe will help us better care for our children.

Emergency Contacts

Emergency Contacts: In case of an emergency, the following numbers should be used.

Palestine	
Name	Emergency Code
POLICE	100
AMBULANCE	101
FIRE	102
International Committee of the Red Cross	Phone
Jerusalem	(02) 5917900
Ramallah	(02) 1/2414030
Gaza	(08) 2822644
Hebron	(02) 2220054
Nablus	(09) 2385077
Jericho	(02) 2322848
Access Coordination Unit	Phone
Access Support 24/7 Hotline:	+972(0)26520014
	+9720543311850
	+972598331185

Emergency Contacts

Lebanon	
Name	Emergency Code
POLICE	112
Lebanese Red Cross	140
FIRE Department	175
General Security	1717
Civil Defense	125
Lebanese Army	1701
Military Operations Room	117

Jordan	
Name	Emergency Code
POLICE	191
AMBULANCE	193
FIRE	199
General Security	192

The PCRF Offices

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Gaza Office

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Jordan Office

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E-mail: a.jaber@pcrf.net

Beirut, Lebanon

Phone: +961 81709083
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