



INVITES YOU
TO ATTEND:

THE FREEDOM CENTER GRAND OPENING

September 8-12, 2021
in Iraqi Kurdistan

You are cordially invited to join Global Hope in Kurdistan for the
Freedom Center Grand Opening from September 8-12, 2021.

Please read the details carefully and then complete the registration form at globalhope.com/freedom if you will be able to attend. Our Global Hope event team is ready to help you make your plans and answer your questions.

IMPORTANT DATES

June 1, 2021 – Early Registration Deadline

July 1, 2021 – Registration Deadline

August 1, 2021 – Flight/Travel Insurance Information and Payment Due (See more information in the Trip Budget and Payment Section below)

TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATIONS

GETTING TO ERBIL, KURDISTAN:

To arrive in time for the first scheduled event...

Tuesday, September 7 – Flights need to depart from the U.S. no later than this date.

Wednesday, September 8 at 10 PM (Erbil Time) – Flights need to arrive by this time.

RETURNING HOME

Sunday, September 12 – Depart on this date if you need to be back at work on Monday. (Many departing flights arrive in the US on the same day.)

Monday, September 13 – Depart on this day if you can stay for the final day of festivities especially for our overseas visitors.

Friday, September 17 – Depart on this day if your time is flexible and you can experience the additional activities planned for our guests. These activities will include many cultural experiences and hands-on service opportunities with Global Hope.

AIRLINES

Flights to and from Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR) are available on the following airlines:

Qatar Airways - www.qatarairways.com

Turkish Airlines - www.turkishairlines.com

Royal Jordanian - www.rj.com

Smaller regional carriers are also available for the final leg of travel; however, not recommended. Due to regional geopolitical dynamics and carrier quality standards, we recommend Qatar Airways as the preferred carriers from travel originating from the United States. This airline has the most reliable, direct, frequent, and affordable flights available. Below are average economy fares for flights originating from major US travel hubs, when booked at least one month in advance. Prices do vary, but these estimates provide some guidelines for what to expect when looking for a ticket.

Flights departing from:

Dallas - \$1500

Los Angeles - \$1100

Atlanta - \$1200

Washington DC - \$1000

Seattle - \$1250

New York - \$1200

PASSPORTS & VISAS

Passports should have at least six months of valid travel time remaining from the date of expiration. If a passport needs to be ordered or renewed, it is important to begin this process as soon as possible. In the age of COVID, processing times are currently longer than normal.

For US passport holders, a 30-day visitor visa for the IKR can be obtained without cost upon arrival at the Erbil airport. This visa cannot be obtained prior to arrival. Any transit/travel through Baghdad requires a **different** visa, issued by the Iraqi Embassy, and **must be** obtained prior to departure from originating country. Travel through Baghdad is **not recommended**.

TRIP INSURANCE

There are many companies that offer international travel insurance. *[Insurance Consultants International](#)* is Global Hope's trusted insurance provider for almost twenty years. They have years of extensive experience providing medical and travel insurance, they and will provide options tailored to meet your needs and concerns.

[Insurance Consultants International](#)

Contact: Lynette Rempel

800-576-2674

lynette@globalhealthinsurance.com

www.GlobalHealthInsurance.com

ACCOMODATIONS

Global Hope will arrange hotel accommodations for our guests prior to the event. Payment for hotel accommodations, meals, and in-country transportation must be collected on or before August 1, 2021. See additional information in the Payment section.

Global Hope will select three hotels for our visitors giving utmost consideration to security, amenities, and cleanliness. Additionally, Global Hope will have a vehicle, driver, translator, and concierge assigned to each hotel to provide support directly to our visitors. These members of our support team will be available to meet your needs for the duration of your stay.

Consider the available hotel options and indicate your selection on the registration form. Global Hope will book your room accordingly. Listed are the possible hotels to be selected for each option. All of these suggested hotels are located inside Erbil.

Option #1 (Luxury) – Divan, Rotana, Ramada (\$250 - \$400/night)

Option #2 (Deluxe) – Erbil International, Cristal, Dedeman, Erbil Arjan by Rotana (\$100 - \$200/night)

Option #3 (Economy) – Best Inn, Canyon (\$75 - \$100/night)

TRIP BUDGET

- Flight - \$1000 to \$1500 (Arranged and paid by guest directly to the airline)
- Travel Insurance - \$150 to \$200 (Arranged and paid by guest directly to insurance broker)
- Hotel – (See options above) Price varies according to option selected and length of stay (Arranged by Global Hope and paid by guest to Global Hope by August 1, 2021).
- All-Inclusive, In-Country Costs (Including Meals, Transportation, Translators - coordinated and provided by Global Hope) - \$150/day. (Arranged by Global Hope and paid by guest to Global Hope by August 1, 2021).
- Shopping and Souvenirs – As desired by guest (Paid by guest)

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Trip payment due by August 1, 2021.

1) Pay at globalhope.com - Online payments incur an additional 3% processing fee.

2) By check to Global Hope at 5435 N Garland Ave, Ste 140-312, Garland, TX 75040.

CURRENCY AND IN-COUNTRY SPENDING

The IKR uses both US dollars and Iraqi Dinars as currency. The IKR is a CASH ONLY economy. The use of personal credit cards, travelers checks, or other electronic transactions are not available (with rare exceptions). All guests must prepare to make all financial transactions in cash while in country, unless informed otherwise. ATM machines are scarcely available around Erbil, with daily withdrawal limits of approximately \$400/day. While these ATMs are available, they are known to be offline from time to time and cannot be guaranteed. There are no easy options for accessing cash from abroad, once inside the IRK, other than the abovementioned ATM machines.

It is highly recommended that US dollars be available on-hand for all your additional anticipated spending and emergency needs. All US dollars must be new model, crisp, clean bills. It is advised to contact your bank and make arrangements for the cash in advance. Sometimes banking institutions must order clean, crisp bills from the US Treasury a week before your desired withdrawal date.

PACKING LIST

Check back – It's Coming Soon

ON-SITE INFORMATION

COVID-19

All COVID guidelines and protocols are subject to change prior to the event. Updates will be communicated as needed in the months ahead. Current regulations and requirements are as follows:

The IRK is presently following guidelines similar to those outlined by the CDC, including social distancing, face coverings, and hand washing. These protocols will be implemented at all Global Hope events and activities as well.

At this time, a rapid COVID PCR test is required for entry into the IKR 48 – 72 hrs prior to departure from abroad. The printed results must be provided at Customs/Passport Control prior to entry into Kurdistan. (Results expire with 96 hrs of taking the PCR test, so please be sure this is taken into consideration when taking the test.)

Prior to departure from the IKR, a rapid COVID PCR test is again required for the return flight. These tests are provided by a government hospital and cost approximately \$50 USDs. Global Hope will handle all arrangements for guests to obtain this test prior to departure.

SECURITY

The security and safety of our guests is Global Hope's top priority. All pre-arranged accommodations/hotels have full-time security details on site.

Global Hope partners with local security forces to provide the security details for all Global Hope sponsored events and activities, and consults with US State Department and Non-Government Organization (NGO) Regional Security Officers to stay current on threat assessments and changes to security protocols.

For all US visitors, Global Hope strongly advises enrolling in the US State Department Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) for dates of travel <https://step.state.gov/>

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Thursday, September 9th – AM – Official Ribbon-Cutting, Grand Opening Ceremony

Thursday, September 9th – PM – Benevolent Outreach, Refugee Program

Friday, September 10th – PM – Freedom Center Open House

Friday, September 10th – PM – Student/Youth Event

Saturday, September 11th – PM – TBA

Saturday, September 11th – PM – Freedom Center Gala & Dinner

Sunday, September 12th – AM – Traditional Kurdish Countryside Picnic

Sunday, September 12th – PM – Worship Service

COMMUNICATION

Hotels provide access to Internet, though it may be intermittent/slow. You are encouraged to download WhatsApp or Signal to communicate with loved ones while inside Kurdistan. Check with your cell phone provider on rates and connectivity for Iraq prior to departure. International plans can often be added to your service reducing the cost for talk and data.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

The Global Hope event team is ready to serve you! Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns you may have as you consider joining us for this very special Freedom Center Grand Opening. Please email heather@global-hope.org and we will get back with you.

REGISTER BEFORE JULY 1 AT

globalhope.com/freedom

Once you register, our event team will reach out to the email you provide to communicate directly regarding your visit. You will also begin to receive periodic updates with additional important information and deadlines for your upcoming travel. We cannot wait to see you in Kurdistan!



The Freedom Center is not about bricks and mortar but rather about the people who enter its doors. It represents thousands from across the Iraqi Kurdistan Region who have the opportunity to experience an enduring hope and freedom.

Lives are empowered. Families are served. Communities are transformed.

Freedom Center plays a vital role in building a nation – one life at a time. But transforming communities and a nation takes more than just hard work. It requires a commitment to the long-haul process towards lasting change. It requires a community of partners who possess an enduring hope for those impacted by conflict.

This is what Global Hope has been committed to for almost twenty years among the people of Iraq and Syria. People, not just projects. Hope in a land of uncertainty. Freedom for all.



Heather Merri

Global Hope, Founder & President