



THE NINEVEH SUSTAINABLE RETURN PROGRAM

A US-Iraqi Partnership to Respond to ISIS's Campaign
of Genocide Against the People of Iraq

ABSTRACT

The NSRP seeks to accelerate the sustainable return of Iraq's persecuted Christian and other religious minorities to the ancient Nineveh Plain through the removal of war-related rubble, rehabilitation of damaged houses, and optimize regional stabilization coordination.

[Nineveh Reconstruction Committee USA](#)

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AN UNSOLICITED PROPOSAL - US AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Requesting Organization

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Abstract

As a consequence of ISIS' genocidal campaign against religious minorities in Iraq, these groups are experiencing the lowest rate of return among Iraqis. The Nineveh Reconstruction Committee USA seeks funding from the US Government to support its Nineveh Sustainable Return Program (NSRP). The program seeks to remove war-related rubble, rehabilitate over 9,000 partially damaged homes in seven towns, and optimize donor-funded stabilization projects in the region. To date, the \$29.5 million project has received \$7 million in financial support allowing for the repair of 2,254 minority homes and revival of two minority towns in the Nineveh Plain. NRC USA seeks another \$22.5 million to complete this program. Absent further funding this program will end prematurely and jeopardize this community's survival.

Support from the US Government will allow us to accelerate sustainable minority returns to the Nineveh Plain. US Government support will also optimize regional donor-financed stabilization, promote inter-ethnic peace, maintain Iraq's pluralistic foundation, defeat ISIS's extremist ideology, attract larger amounts of private investment, and jump start the region's devastated economy in advance of next year's national elections. NRC-USA submits this unsolicited application for a grant or cooperative agreement in accordance with USAID's *Grants and Cooperative Agreements to non-Governmental Organizations, section 303.3.5.5 "Unsolicited Concept Papers and Applications,"* and the statutory exceptions outlined in the Office of the Procurement Executive's *Justification for Other than Full and Open Competition Guide*.

Background

On March 17, 2016 Secretary of State John Kerry pronounced ISIS "responsible for genocide" against Christians, Yezidis, and other religious minorities. On August 15, 2017 Secretary of State Rex Tillerson affirmed the official US Government policy determination that "ISIS is clearly responsible for genocide against Yezidis, Christians, and Shia Muslims in areas it controls or has controlled." The Nineveh Plain, ancient homeland of Iraq's religious minorities, was deliberately and systematically targeted by ISIS that sought to eradicate any vestige of a Christian minority presence through mass expulsion, murder, rape and the physical destruction of their religious, cultural and habitable infrastructure. This year's State Department report on international religious freedom states that since 2003 the Christian population in Iraq has declined from 1.4 million to fewer than 250,000.

As a result of this genocidal campaign, Christian settlements suffered relatively more physical damage, resulting in low rates of return to liberated lands. According to local Church and international officials, the Christian minority has seen the lowest rate of return among all Iraqi IDPs. East Mosul, for example, has seen 90% of its displaced persons return home compared to Nineveh Plain's 12% though the latter was liberated months earlier. This sectarian-based return gap reflects the unique large scale and deliberate destruction of Christian towns and represents a substantial impediment to the maintenance of a pluralistic Iraq in the future, something which is vital to the US national interest and regional security.

International donors tasked with post-ISIS stabilization have been slow to respond to the needs of these persecuted minorities who have turned to privately-funded Churches and NGOs for support. A depopulated Nineveh Plain, control over which is disputed by the central and Kurdish regional governments, threatens Iraq's stability as it encourages sectarian-based militias from other parts of Iraq to stake competing claims over these lands. Militia presence has already stoked sectarian-based clashes. The failure of this minority community to reestablish itself would represent an ideological victory for ISIS' brand of extremism and destroy Iraq's pluralistic foundation. This grave situation calls for an urgent US Government aid response.

In February 2017, the Nineveh Reconstruction Committee formed in Erbil, Iraq to plan for the return of minority IDPs to towns in the Nineveh Plain. The NRC conducted damage assessment and population intent surveys. Engineering teams catalogued the destruction of almost 13,000 private homes and damage to schools, health clinics, public and religious and cultural buildings (survey data can be obtained at www.nrciraq.org). NRC USA identified 9,075 damaged homes fit for rehabilitation or removal at a cost of \$29.5 million. These findings constitute the baseline data for the Nineveh Sustainable Return Program. Since February, the NSRP has received \$7 million in financial support from Europe-based Aid to the Church in Need International, US-based Knights of Columbus, and the Government of Hungary. This support is resulting in the rehabilitation of 2,254 homes and organized return of several thousand IDPs, restoring community life to two previously depopulated towns and providing initial footholds in others. Another \$22.5 million is needed to complete the program. NRC USA's coalition of local Churches, NGOs, construction and other businesses is uniquely positioned to partner with the US Government. Absent additional funding assistance this program will terminate prematurely and jeopardize this community's survival.

Objectives

- Accelerate sustainable returns of Iraq's persecuted minorities to multi-confessional areas of northern Iraq, politically stabilize the volatile Nineveh Plain, and optimize donor-funded humanitarian and stabilization programs in Ninawa Province.
- Support the legitimacy of the Government of Iraq, strengthen provincial and local government, ensure long-term peace among Iraq's peoples, sustain Iraq's pluralistic foundation, and prevent the resurgence of ISIS's ideology of intolerance and violence.
- Set a firm community-based foundation for successful post-ISIS stabilization and larger-scale reconstruction, political reconciliation, and inclusive participation in next year's national elections for parliament and provincial government.

Methodology

Stabilization Capacities Forged by Humanitarian Disaster Response

The NRC USA’s methodology draws from its experience providing life-saving disaster relief for up to 130,000 Christians IDPs since 2014. Led by the Chaldean Catholic Archdiocese of Erbil in coordination with local notables, civic groups, businesses, and local officials, various types of temporary housing facilities, including large-scale camps, were established in multiple locations where IDPs from a variety of religious minority communities, but also non-minority IDPs, have been provided shelter, water, food, sanitation, basic health, primary and secondary education, cash grants, winterization kits, and other critical supplies and services. These relief activities have been supported by Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) International, a Europe-based pontifical foundation, and Knights of Columbus, a US-based charitable organization, along with dozens of other private charitable organizations worldwide, totaling over \$40 million in direct financial support fully managed and implemented by the Archdiocese and its local affiliates. It is from this tested local project management and civic infrastructure of Churches, NGOs, businesses and experts that the Nineveh Reconstruction Committee was formed in February 2017 in order to facilitate transition from humanitarian relief to resettlement and stabilization operations in newly liberated areas of Ninawa Province. Today, about 95,000 IDPs still rely on relief support but anxiously await an opportunity to return home to the Nineveh Plain.

Community Empowerment for Sustainable Returns

Based on a survey of population intent within the IDP and nearby refugee communities, we have determined that a majority of them would like to return home but that residential destruction and lack of external financing to repair their dwellings were decisive factors blocking their return home. A February 2017 survey found that 41% of respondents wanted to return home, up from about 3% six months earlier, demonstrating the profound impact that hope of external material support can have on people’s intent to rebuild their former lives. Today, we estimate that at least 65% of IDPs will return home in the Nineveh Plain if their dwellings are made habitable.

A damage assessment survey¹ conducted by a team of local engineers, architects, and financial and project management experts, catalogued 12,419 houses in the Nineveh Plain that were either damaged, burned or destroyed. Based on this survey and estimated costs to repair those dwellings, we identified 8,078 homes that can be rapidly rehabilitated for resettlement, and an additional 997 destroyed homes which must be cleared and removed so that safe restoration and stabilization of the communities can begin. An implementation plan was drawn up. Initial funding from ACN International, Knights of Columbus, and the Government of Hungary totaling \$5 million, with another \$2 million secured from other smaller donors, allowed the NRC coalition to initiate the first set of home restorations. With these initial funds, in the past two months, 2,254 homes have been or are being repaired in two previously devastated communities. Site selection, costing of construction materials, and financial and program management is being executed by a team of local architects, engineers, and construction firms on the ground with decades of commercial experience in the private construction and public infrastructure sectors.

¹ The survey was conducted in Al Qosh, Teleskuf, Baqofa, Batnaya, Telkef, Bazhani, Bashiqa, Bartella, Karamles, and Qaraqosh.

Nearly 100% of all program spending, including procurement of construction materials, is conducted through local businesses, construction companies, professional experts and labor. This approach maximizes the impact of donor funding on reviving the local economy and generating local employment, both necessary to sustainable resettlement and, with it, long term economic development and political reconciliation. Such a program implementation approach deters permanent population departures and emigration of professional and educated workers that are critical to the long term economic and political stabilization of the region.

With US Government funding, NRC USA will be able to continue and expand its on-going sustainable return program and complete it in time for Iraq's national elections set for late 2018. Absent additional funding this program will end prematurely and jeopardize this community's survival. Below are the key program components of the Nineveh Sustainable Return Program:

Program Component #1: *Rubble Removal*

Those homes, public and commercial buildings, and infrastructure that are destroyed beyond repair along with other war-related debris must be removed for environmental, safety, and confidence-building reasons. These hazardous areas represent significant risk to life and limb, especially for children, and must be immediately removed in order to ensure sustainable IDP returns to this area. With the appropriate equipment, this phase can be initiated immediately and completed prior to the onset of winter. Rubble removal will also accelerate the execution of stabilization projects planned by other donor-funded initiatives. The following seven settlements have been selected for rubble removal: Batnaya, Bahzani, Bashiqa, Bartulla, Karamles, Qaraqosh, and Teleskof. We have identified local construction equipment operators, equipment maintenance workers, and general physical labor that we can immediately deploy to launch this phase of the project. Employment of local people will help regenerate local economies and attract a larger amount of private capital for longer-term economic development of this region. The equipment we require is listed below and will be utilized strictly and only in support of this program. NRC USA will coordinate closely with local Iraqi security and other government authorities with respect to ensuring that areas designated for rubble and debris removal are cleared of mines and unexploded ordinance. The US Government has funded major demining programs in the Nineveh Province and the NSRP builds on that investment.

With US Government support, the NRC will purchase or lease the following rubble-removal equipment listed below from local suppliers that currently have supplied US Department of Defense contractors supporting Coalition efforts to defeat ISIS. NRC USA has identified available and qualified machine operators and mechanics who have been trained on maintaining this equipment and on how to adhere properly to all safety and environmental laws, regulations and guidelines of the Government of Iraq as well as to international donor standards.

- Wheel loaders (2)
- Rigid dump trucks (2)
- Skid steer loaders (2)

Program Component #2: Rehabilitation of Damaged Homes

These communities have suffered substantial physical damage from ISIS and coalition military strikes to expel the terrorists from these lands. Worse, these towns have yet to see the restoration of water and power as the UNDP lags in executing stabilization projects in the Nineveh Plain. In order to ensure immediate and sustainable returns, the NRC USA will (1) initiate the repair of thousands of homes while (2) coordinating with donors supporting stabilization projects to restore water, power, and other critical basic public services in areas of minority returns. The NRC USA will tap into its roster of infrastructure, and construction engineers, architects, accountants, general contractors, and labor to rehabilitate residential dwellings and execute basic infrastructure works. The NRC USA will apply the program and financial management capability developed from its on-going humanitarian aid work and initiation of the Nineveh Sustainable Return Program, totaling over \$40 million in funding to date.

Seven towns have been identified for this rehabilitation program (Batnaya, Bahzani, Bashiqa, Bartulla, Karamles, Qaraqosh, Teleskof) and in each town individual dwellings have been identified as fit for rehabilitation as assessed through a survey conducted by our team of engineers and architects. Our surveys indicate that 35% of the displaced population may well not return to their homes in the Nineveh Plain. We have excluded from the rehabilitation project list all dwellings whose owners have been registered as non-returnees. Each dwelling will be restored to habitability and the return of owners carefully coordinated, monitored, and evaluated post-rehabilitation. Survey data has been digitally catalogued. The monitoring and evaluation process will occur simultaneously with the actual rehabilitation and the lessons drawn from the evaluation will be fed back into our program implementation plan in order to improve program effectiveness. Project materials and work requirements have been previously determined by our team of construction engineers and architects with support from other local businesses in order to accelerate the rehabilitation timeline. See the section on Project Cost for additional information.

Table 1: Summary of Estimates for Rehabilitation of Dwellings

	Destroyed/ID for removal	Burned/ID for Repair	Damaged/ID for Repair	Under Repair
Batnaya	521	69	222	34
Bahzani	60	45	117	-
Bashiqa	50	127	218	-
Bartulla	94	226	892	-
Karamles	89	241	424	600
Qaraqosh	115	1,568	2,730	720
Teleskof	69	95	1,104	900
Total Houses ID	997	2,371	5,707	2,254
Est Cost per House (USD)	1,500	7,000	2,000	3,000
Est Total Cost (USD)	1,495,500	16,597,000	11,414,000	6,762,000
TOTAL HOUSES ID FOR REPAIR/REMOVAL	9,075			
TOTAL PROJECT COST (USG)	29,506,500			
TOTAL HOUSES PRESENTLY UNDER REPAIR	2,254			
TOTAL FUNDS PRESENTLY ALLOCATED	7,000,000			
TOTAL FUNDING REQUEST	22,506,500			
TOTAL HOUSES FOR FUNDING REQUEST	6,821			

US Government funding will build on the program's achievements to date: Through \$7 million in grants from ACN International, Knights of Columbus, the Government of Hungary, and other donors, the NRC USA coalition recently rehabilitated or is rehabilitating 2,254 homes in Teleskof and Karamles, with foothold operations ongoing in other communities.

Program Component #3: *Coordinating Restoration of Water, Power, and other Public Services*

The United Nations Development Programme leads post-ISIS stabilization efforts in the four ISIS-affected provinces. Its Fund Facility for Stabilization has planned and executed a number of projects to rehabilitate local infrastructure to facilitate sustainable returns and succeeded in facilitating the return of millions of IDPs. Its record of achievement in minority areas, however, has been poor. Despite initiating over 1,000 stabilization projects, UNDP has completed only two of them in the Nineveh Plain, reflecting the lack of local community participation in project prioritization, coordination and execution.

Through US Government support, NRC USA will strengthen its local partners' institutional capacity to more effectively coordinate with the UNDP, the Government of Iraq, other donor officials, and donor-implementing partners and integrate our rehabilitation project with the restoration of critical public services, such as water, sewerage, power, health, and school services. NRC USA will also help its local partners to coordinate more closely and effectively with multi-donor Cluster Coordination Committees for WASH, logistics, food security, health, camps and other sectors.

We have engaged Dr. Mostafa Al Hiti, Head of the central government's Iraq's Reconstruction Fund, to coordinate our rehabilitation activities with his national government reconstruction and infrastructure plans, including as a feeder of engineering data on damaged local and provincial level infrastructure. Dr. Al Hiti shares NRC USA's view that targeted and coordinated donor and Iraqi government stabilization and infrastructure support must be conducted in a manner that attracts a far larger amount of local, national, and international private capital. NRC USA has already received preliminary interest from major wealth centers to invest in local private sector industries valued in the tens of millions of dollars and will pursue this private sector development opportunity through other resources.

Expected Results

Through the Nineveh Sustainable Return Program, the NRC USA expects that minority returns to the Nineveh Plain region will approximate those percentages reached in other parts of Iraq, specifically the ISIS-affected provinces.

Table 2: Expected Results of the Nineveh Sustainable Return Program

Program Components	Program Description	Beneficiaries	Outcomes
1. Rubble Removal	Destroyed homes are cleared for safety, environmental and confidence-building reasons.	Iraqi Minorities Government of Iraq Anti-ISIS Coalition	Settlements cleared of debris and destroyed homes and other physical structures.
2. Rehabilitation of Damaged Homes	Burned and partially damaged homes are identified, repaired and resettled.	Iraqi Minorities Government of Iraq Anti-ISIS Coalition	Return over 8,000 homes to habitability.
3. Stabilization Coordination	Coordination with UNDP, Government of Iraq, and other entities to ensure returnees gain access to water, power, and other public services.	Iraqi Minorities Government of Iraq Anti-ISIS Coalition	Sustain returns through access to clean water, power, roads, and other services.

Realizing USAID’s Mission

This project contributes to US national security and foreign policy objectives to promote stabilization and pluralism in post-ISIS Iraq, and to provide critical assistance to victims of genocide. This project is also aligned with strategic humanitarian and post-war stabilization objectives set by the US Agency for International Development:

- It will promote “the protection of these groups – and others subject to violent extremism – [as] a human rights priority for the Trump Administration...” and permit the US Government “to protect religious minority communities from terrorist attacks and preserve their cultural heritage” as stated by Secretary Tillerson last August 15th.²
- It aligns with President Trump’s January 28, 2017 *Presidential Memorandum Plan to Defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria* which recognizes that “ISIS has engaged in a systematic campaign of persecution and extermination in those territories it enters or controls.”
- It follows President Trump’s May 16, 2017 *Notice Regarding the Continuation of the National Emergency with Respect to the Stabilization of Iraq* “to deal with the unusual and extraordinary threat to the orderly reconstruction of Iraq, the restoration and maintenance of peace and security in the country, and the development of political, administrative, and economic institutions in Iraq.”
- It meets Congress’ statutory requirement that funds be appropriated to “improve access to secure locations for obtaining humanitarian and resettlement services...for victims of genocide” and that calls on the Secretary of State to devise a plan to “promote the political and economic rights of such minorities, including the return, rehabilitation, and protection of property in areas of conflict.”³

² Remarks on the 2016 International Religious Freedom Annual Report by Rex W. Tillerson, Secretary of State, Treaty Room, Washington, DC August 15, 2017.

³ Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Division J, Title VIII, Section 7033).

- Through its existing transatlantic public-private partnership between the US-based Knights of Columbus and the Europe-based ACN International, and the Government of Hungary, this project advances the goals of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS.

Project Cost

The total cost of the Nineveh Sustainable Return Program for the secure return of the IDP minority population is estimated at \$29.5 million of which \$7 million has been secured and is being expended. The NSRP requires an additional \$22.5 million to complete its three-pronged approach to restoring sustainable minority life to the Nineveh Plain in northern Iraq. No US Government funds will be spent for religious purposes.

Cost Determinants:

- Costs for rehabilitation of partially damaged dwellings - \$2,000/dwelling
- Costs for rehabilitation of burned dwellings - \$7,000/dwelling
- Costs of rubble/debris removal of destroyed homes - \$1,500/lot
- Program management costs set at 5% of total.

Table 3: Estimated Cost to Complete by Cost Category

Program Component	Cost to Complete	Description of Costs
1. Rubble Removal		Procurement of equipment, labor, maintenance
2. Rehabilitation of Damaged Houses		Construction materials, engineers, architects, inspectors, labor
3. Stabilization coordination		Program management team
4. Program Management		Overall project management and reporting costs
Total		

Project Duration

The total project period, including rubble removal and restoration of repairable homes, is estimated to be 16 months. Each of the NSRP components will be implemented as follows:

1. The Rubble Removal Component can be immediately executed upon lease or purchase of equipment. This program will be conducted in seven towns over a period of six months.
2. The Rehabilitation of Damaged Homes Component began in July 2017, but with US Government support will be extended to other settlements and be completed in 16 months.
3. The Stabilization Coordination Component will begin immediately and continue beyond the program period in consideration of the multi-year time frame required for stabilization, reconstruction, and economic revitalization of Nineveh Plain and Iraq overall. This post-program work will continue through support from other resources.

Table 4: Estimated TimeLine for Project Completion by Component (illustrative)

	July 17	Aug 17	Sept 17	Oct 17	Nov 17	Dec 17	Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	Apr 18
Program Comp 1: Rubble Removal												
Karamles, etc		x	x	x								
Telesfuf, etc	x	x	x									
Others												
Program Comp 2: Rehabilitation of Homes												
Teleskof	x	x	x									
Karamles		x	x	x								
Other												
Other												
Program Comp 3: Stabilization Coordination				x	x	x	x	x	X	x	X	X

Contract Vehicle

First, NRC seeks an unsolicited grant or cooperative agreement in accordance with USAID’s *Grants and Cooperative Agreements to Non-Governmental Organizations, section 303.3.5.5 “Unsolicited Concept Papers and Applications.”* A grant to NRC USA will leverage its institutional experience managing other large grants valued in the tens of millions of dollars secured from other international donors, including the US Government, Knights of Columbus, Medecins Sans Frontiere International, Government of Hungary, and ACN International among other donors. The Nineveh Sustainable Return Program meets the criteria set by this guidance for sole source support in the following manner:

- *Clearly demonstrates a unique, innovative, or proprietary program:* The NSRP is the sole on-going public-private partnership program in Iraq currently rehabilitating damaged homes to promote immediate minority returns. No other program of this magnitude is being implemented or is planned for the targeted purpose of restoring minority communities in the strategically critical Nineveh Plain. USAID funding would extend, expand and accelerate existing successful projects. With winter and 2018 national elections approaching there is insufficient time to seek competitive bidding, nor are alternative implementers available who could quickly be mobilized to meet the time objectives, and such implementers as outsiders would be much more expensive as well.
- *Represents an appropriate use of USAID funds to support or stimulate a public response:* The US Congress and the Department of State specifically committed to supporting the victims of genocide. The May 5th Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017, (Division J, Title VII, Section 7033) calls for funds to be appropriated “under the headings International Disaster Assistance and Migration and Refugee Assistance” to “improve access to secure locations for obtaining humanitarian and resettlement services...[to] ...vulnerable and persecuted religious communities, including victims of genocide designated by the Secretary of State.” On August 15th Secretary Rex Tillerson affirmed the genocide designation and averred that “the protection of these groups – and others subject to violent extremism – is a human rights priority for the Trump Administration.”

Support for the NSRP would align US aid policy with this statutory requirement and U.S. Government policy imperative.

- *Fits within an existing Development Objective:* The NSRP is a post-ISIS stabilization program specifically designed to facilitate sustainable returns of IDPs, support the stability of the Government of Iraq, negate ISIS’ genocidal campaign against minority communities, promote reconciliation among Iraq’s diverse communities, and generate local economic development and employment opportunities. These goals echo the goals of UNDP’s Fund Facility for Stabilization to which USAID has contributed \$269 million.

Second, the NSRP request for sole source support falls within the guidelines of the *Justification for Other than Full and Open competition (JOFOC) Guide* issued by the Office of the Procurement Executive (A/OPE) on June, 2016. This program meets one or more of JOFOC’s statutory exemptions to the requirement for competitive bidding, particularly the Unusual and Compelling Urgency Chapter in which “the government would be seriously injured unless the number of sources solicited is limited to those applied...and delay of the award would result in serious injury, financial or other, to the government.” This exemption authority is used “to provide rapid deployment of supplies and/or services to support time critical diplomatic missions.” Leaders of Iraq’s Christian community have made clear that unless immediate action is taken to facilitate their return to the Nineveh Plain, and in consideration of the particular hardships they have faced as targeted victims of ISIS’ campaign of genocide and persecution, this ancient community will cease to exist. From a US national security perspective, prospects for a post-ISIS pluralistic Iraq would thereby be severely undermined. The impact of Christianity’s demise in Iraq would be a major and permanent victory for ISIS’ ideology with wide political repercussions in Iraq and the Middle East, and it would undermine global confidence in coalition efforts to defeat ISIS and ISIS objectives to destroy pluralism in Iraq.

Organizational Description

The Nineveh Reconstruction Committee USA (representing the three largest Christian groups in Iraq) is a joint and transatlantic venture between US-based Knights of Columbus and Europe-based Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) International, which together and in coordination with the Chaldean Catholic Archdiocese of Erbil, have expended about \$40 million in direct funding since 2014 to support programs in refugee relief, reconstruction, and stabilization, including the rehabilitation and construction of schools, health clinics, camps and temporary shelters for internally displaced persons, various civil works, including sanitation facilities, a 200 stall community market center, as well as residential and commercial housing projects. NRC USA is a 501c3 nonprofit registered in the Commonwealth of Delaware with a representation office in Washington, DC and a fully-staffed office in Erbil, Iraq with 20 personnel currently engaged in a number of humanitarian, stabilization, and reconstruction projects. The Erbil office buttresses its on-site staff with additional architectural, construction and environmental expertise obtained through existing contracts with two prominent local construction firms and an architectural firm, bringing the NSRP substantial project management experience. These local firms provide high

end professional services for all of the NRC USA-related rehabilitation and reconstruction programs being executed in the Iraqi provinces of Erbil, Dohuk, and Ninawa.

Following is a list of its past, recently completed, and on-going projects:

- Construction of the “Mar Qardakh School” which offers 500 high school students an international baccalaureate program in Erbil, Iraq. The \$5 million project design and construction was fully managed by the Archdiocese of Erbil and made possible in part through a \$1.6 million grant from the US State Department Fund for Minorities in Iraq in 2010.
- Construction of a Healthcare Clinic in Erbil, through a \$2 million joint venture grant with France-based *Medecins Sans Frontiere International*.
- Construction of 140 unit low-income residential complex in Erbil through a \$3.2 million grant provided by the Knights of Columbus.
- Rehabilitation of 1,500 residential dwellings in Teleskof and Karamles through \$4 million in grants from the Government of Hungary and the Knights of Columbus.
- Establishing the Catholic University in Erbil, a higher education and research institution providing recognized degrees in the arts and sciences within an inter-faith environment, funded through a \$3.2 million grant from the Italian Conference of Catholic Bishops. CUE hosts lectures and conferences such on “Religious Freedom Day,” co-hosted by the US Consulate Erbil.
- Rehabilitation of a hotel complex located across the street from the US Consulate in Erbil. The \$1.5 million privately-funded rehabilitation project will serve as a guest house for visitors engaged in a multiplicity of humanitarian and other people related activities.
- Construction, installation, civic works, and maintenance of five privately-funded IDP camps, including procurement and maintenance of several thousand trailers and provision of water, food, sanitation, basic health, cash grants, winterization kits, and other critical support of up to 130,000 IDPs from all communities. This program includes camp closures and grounds restoration according to international environmental standards.

Key Personnel

Stephen M. Rasche, J.D. (Chief of Party) is President of the Nineveh Reconstruction Committee USA and will serve as the program’s Chief of Party. Mr. Rasche is Counsel with the Chaldean Catholic Archdiocese of Erbil, and Vice Chancellor of External Affairs for the Catholic University in Erbil. In his role with the Archdiocese, Mr. Rasche also serves as President of the Nineveh Reconstruction Committee through which he is directly responsible for the

humanitarian and resettlement programs for over 10,000 families of displaced Christians in Northern Iraq. Mr. Rasche has over 30 years' experience in international business and development projects, including extensive work in Latin America, Asia and the Middle East. Upon graduation from Law School, he worked in the International Practice Group of Morrison & Foerster LLP where he specialized in the areas of international trade compliance and international due diligence, including regular work on behalf of Fortune 500 companies. Additionally, Mr. Rasche has significant experience in serving as a board member of various non-profit entities. He is a co-founder of the Veterans Law Project of New Hampshire, which provides pro-bono legal aid to returning veterans and their families. Mr. Rasche holds a B.A. in International Relations from Boston University, and a J.D. from the University of San Diego. He is a member of the State Bar of New Hampshire in addition to numerous Federal Courts including the U.S. Court of International Trade and the U.S. Tax Court.

Michael R. Shevock (Deputy Chief of Party/Director of Security & Logistics): Mr. Shevock brings over thirty years of federal service and twenty-five years of investigative experience and currently supports relief operations for the Archdiocese of Erbil. A graduate of the US Coast Guard Academy, he served four years with Coast Guard Intelligence, seven years with the Naval Investigative Service and over ten years with the US Customs Service. He concluded his federal career as an assistant regional attaché for the Department of Homeland Security ICE in Frankfurt, Germany. Following his government career he has been actively engaged in security structures for international joint ventures throughout the USA, Latin America and the Middle East. He has been published in *USNI Proceedings*.

Dr. Kent R. Hill (Strategic Advisor): Kent Hill is a Member of the Board of the Nineveh Reconstruction Committee USA. Currently he is the Executive Director of the Religious Freedom Institute after serving six years as Senior Vice President at World Vision, one of the largest faith-based relief and development organizations in the world. He also served for eight years as Assistant Administrator for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), responsible for U.S. foreign assistance to Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, and, subsequently, all USAID health programs worldwide. Earlier in his career, Dr. Hill was President of Eastern Nazarene College, and President of Washington, D.C.'s Institute on Religion and Democracy. In 2010, as a Vice President at the John Templeton Foundation, Hill, along with Tom Farr, conceived Georgetown's Religious Freedom Project and secured funding to launch the project. Dr. Hill has published a book on Christianity and the Soviet Union. His Ph.D. is from the University of Washington.

Andrew Walther (Strategic Advisor): Mr. Walther has spent over a decade helping to oversee charitable and cultural projects for the Knights of Columbus, the world's largest Catholic fraternal organization with nearly 2 million members. He has run K of C's communications initiatives and oversees its nearly \$15 million in humanitarian efforts especially on behalf of Christians and other religious minorities targeted by ISIS for genocide in the Middle East. As part of this work, he oversaw the writing of the nearly 300-page report on genocide against Christians by ISIS, submitted to the State Department in 2016, and led the public awareness campaign around that report. The report helped convince Secretary Kerry that genocide had been

committed. Andrew has worked closely with Christian communities in Iraq and Syria and helped organize Congressman Chris Smith's (R-NJ) CODEL to Iraq in 2016. He has also worked with the White House, NSC and State Department to find solutions to the fact that minority communities too often get overlooked by USG aid programs. Andrew's other humanitarian work has included assisting with planning and execution on domestic disaster relief initiatives, and overseeing the organization's work post-earthquake prosthetics program for children in Haiti from 2010 to 2015. In addition, Andrew has organized museum and exhibits and conferences in the United States, Europe and Latin America, and has served as a liaison for the K of C to the Vatican, the USCCB, and other humanitarian, religious and government organizations. Prior to working with the Knights of Columbus, Andrew worked as a journalist and taught for several years at the University of Southern California, where he earned his BA (1998) and MA in Classics (2003) and was awarded the university's outstanding teaching award (2003).

Max Primorac (Senior Technical Consultant/Washington DC Coordinator). Primorac brings 25 years of program management leadership. As the State Department's Deputy Director for the Iraq Reconstruction & Management Office he oversaw \$2 billion in US foreign aid and was US Embassy Baghdad's Liaison for International Donor Coordination. He served on the White House Task Force to Protect Religious Minorities in Iraq and as Senior Adviser for Stabilization & Transition to the Secretary of State's Iraq Coordinator. Afterwards, he was senior adviser to the Afghan leadership in building provincial government under a USAID-funded public administration reform project. Prior to government service he was President of the Center for Civil Society in Southeastern Europe managing democracy building and reconciliation programs in the Balkans with funding from USAID, European Union, UN agencies, US Institute for Peace, National Endowment for Democracy, and other donors. He is President of the Institute for Stabilization and Transition where he participates in numerous initiatives on fragile states and transatlantic relations. He received his MA degree in international relations from the University of Chicago and BA degree from Franklin & Marshall College.