

## REPORT ON THE KURDISTAN 2016 OUTREACH MISSION

In February 2016, a team of 14 physicians, lead by Dr. Gazi Zibari, traveled from North America to Kurdistan, Iraq for the 7th International Joint Symposium. This venture was supported by the International and Americas Hepato-Pancreati-Biliary Associations, Operation Hope & World Surgical Foundation. Also, our team was supported by Kurdish Regional Government and particularly by the Prime Minister Mr. Nichervan Barzani's Health Foundation and Province of Duhok Director of health system and by their Governor. The pivotal concept of this team's efforts since the inception and dated back to 1992 has evolved around "capacity building."

Over a one-week period of time, 55 major and complex operations were performed,

not to mention that advanced emergency medicine training and nursing care were performed. Over the last 7 years, the surgical advancements have progressed, and now Kurdish surgeons independently perform annually over 150 living related & unrelated kidney transplants and have matured from no laparoscopic or hepatobiliary experience to over 1,000 of such cases done yearly. During our last journey, surgical capacity building included gastric sleeves, kasai procedure, radical neck dissections, hepatic trisegmentectomies, and laparoscopic adrenal and pancreatectomies. Similarly, emergency medicine has progressed from limited "front line" care to developing fully trained on-field paramedics to stabilize patients en route to hospitals where

physicians are now fully trained in BLS, ALS, ATLS, and PALS. Also, the trauma and the neurosurgical team performed many complex surgeries as well.

Our next step is to support the academic efforts of the Kurdish surgeons by helping them develop clinical research teams and more advanced surgical training such as laparoscopic fellowship and tele-fellowship.

The success of our surgical efforts has been founded on strong collaboration, trust and mutual education between the visiting and host teams. Our hope and aim is that these advances continue to progress over the long term.



Kurdish and visiting medical team at the Kurdish governors' home



left neck sarcoma



Operating team



4 weeks after radical neck mass resection