

---

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

This historic trip to Iraqi Kurdistan would not have been possible without the support of a number of individuals. We are eternally grateful to the Kurdistan Regional Government, and particularly Speaker of the Kurdistan Parliament Dr. Kamal Kirkuki, for sponsoring our visit and facilitating our trip. And to Shahla Al-Kli and Dr. Kirkuki's hard-working staff of advisors—we thank you for working around the clock to arrange meetings and plan outings and trips for us. We would have been lost without you and your guidance. And we thank your families for being so patient while you worked so diligently during our two-week stay. Zor zor spas.

To the Bendetson family and to Sherman Teichman, Heather Barry and the Institute for Global Leadership staff—we are deeply indebted to you for providing us with this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to travel to Iraq and for supporting us for the past year. Thank you for your passion, dedication and most of all—your friendship.

To all of the professors, academics, journalists and alumni who spoke with us prior to our departure to Kurdistan—Mohammed Ahmed, Michael Kelly, Joost Hiltermann, Sean Kane, Robert Olson, Ian Klaus, David Romano, Michael Kelly, Ethan Corbin and Matan Chorev—you piqued our interest and provided us with a springboard for our research. Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedules to indulge our curiosity with your knowledge and insight.

To Rana Abdul-Aziz—you are the busiest person we know, and we thank you for taking two weeks of your winter break to accompany us to Kurdistan. Thank you for translating, for sharing your stories, for sitting with us in office hours and for spending all that time in the car with us. And to Zach Iscol, our favorite marine—we thank you for your advice, guidance and help with the editing process. Thank you for reading all of our papers and answering all of our e-mails. We hope we made this the best of your five trips to Iraq, and may you always be young at heart. To both of you—we really cannot thank you enough. This trip would not have been the same without you.

And lastly, to our parents. Thank you for trusting your children enough to let them travel on this intellectual journey to Iraq. For your support, encouragement and especially your patience—we are eternally grateful.