

May 17, 2011

Hello! June 19 I plan to leave again for the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to work with [Christian Peacemaker Teams](#). I did this last summer and hope to go in the summer of 2012 as well, since I have made a three-year commitment. Last year's experience was an exciting, life giving time of learning about the culture and political situation and supporting people who work for peace and justice.

The political situation has changed since last year. For two months this year (February 17 – April 18), thousands of protesters gathered daily in public squares across the province where the CPT team lives in the Kurdistan Regional Governate (KRG) of Iraq. They called for an end to corruption in the KRG and a peaceful transition of power from the two ruling parties to a democratically elected government.

The public gatherings were nonviolent. When the government soldiers used their guns on the demonstrators, a group formed, calling themselves the "White Group" that dressed in white and daily stood between the demonstrators and the soldiers, forming a human wall to prevent further violence. This worked for a while, and some soldiers expressed that they were sympathetic to the views of the demonstrators. By the end of two months, though, the president of Iraq called in thousands of troops to harass the demonstrators by beating, arresting, and torturing many, preventing them from gathering. Though the protests have now ended, the people are still determined to work for change in the government and are planning their next steps.

During the months of the protests, the CPT team was invited to be part of the White Group, and joined the human wall that was between the soldiers and the protestors. The team also organized a meeting between the organizers of the protests and U.S. embassy staff to try to gain U.S. support for the movement.

I feel blessed to be going to be part of CPT's team during this exciting time. Because I will be away from my home community and familiar surroundings, though, I desire your prayers. I also would appreciate whatever financial support you would like to give. The trip costs around \$3500. If you would like to give, you can send a check to Christian Peacemaker Teams, P.O. Box 6508, Chicago, IL 60680. Please include a note saying something like, "I am aware David Hovde is volunteering with CPT and I would like this donation to support this ministry." Please let me know about your gift so I can thank you and keep track of how much money has been raised. You can also choose to give your donation to me directly, and I can pass it on to CPT.

Please pray for me as I prepare to leave, pray for the CPT team, and pray for the people in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq who continue to work for a more just and democratic government. I welcome your correspondence while I am away. Thanks!

Peace of Christ,

David Hovde