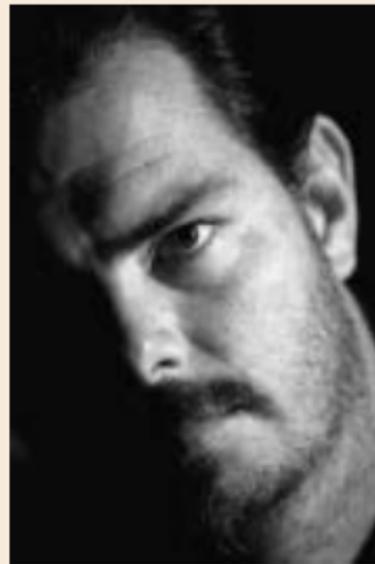


## HALDEN KROG



## IN LIBYA

# 'There are injured in places we could not get to'

DOCTORS from Gift of the Givers left Libya on Wednesday afternoon for South Africa after spending more than a week in the war-torn country providing expert medical assistance to the injured in Ajdabiya and the rebel stronghold of Benghazi.

"We are very sad to leave, especially with all the injured in the places we could not get to," said mission leader Dr Imtiaz Sooliman.

Though disappointed, Sooliman was positive about what the mission had achieved.

"Sending our Libyan team a week ahead was the best thing we could have done. It meant when we arrived, most of the contacts had been made and our doctors could start their work immediately," he said.

"Our biggest problem was getting into Libya. From then it was dealing with disorganisation in the hospitals, and the hierarchical system within the structures at the hospital.

"Our doctors were training inexperienced staff with X-rays and so forth. There is no one to blame. Remember,

it is only 27 days post the start of the revolution and sufficient systems are not in place," Sooliman said.

He said the biggest thing is keeping alive and knowing when to get out.

"The challenges faced in situations like this are access, avoiding bombs, keeping the balance and knowing when to leave.

"We pulled out of Ajdabiya hours before it was attacked. Now we've left Benghazi, only to hear there is fighting there."

With news of fighting in Benghazi,

the words of orthopaedic surgeon Dr Livan Meneses-Turino ring true: "Our presence here shows the international community is needed to level the playing fields."

The team travelled back to Cairo yesterday and were due to return to South Africa this morning.

● *Krog travelled with the disaster relief organisation Gift of the Givers, which was on a humanitarian mission to provide assistance to the Libyan people. See [www.giftofthegivers.org](http://www.giftofthegivers.org)*