



**City of Kingston  
Report to Council  
Report Number 19-300**

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**To:** Mayor and Members of Council  
**From:** Lanie Hurdle, Interim Chief Administrative Officer  
**Resource Staff:** Cheryl Hitchen, Social Policy & Strategic Community  
Development Manager  
**Date of Meeting:** November 5, 2019  
**Subject:** UNHCR Cities #WithRefugees Campaign

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**Executive Summary:**

In 2018, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) launched a campaign that invites cities and local authorities all over the world who are working to promote inclusion, support refugees and bring communities together to sign a statement of solidarity showing their support for the Cities #WithRefugees campaign.

This campaign aims to raise international awareness of the plight of refugees around the world and the value they bring to cities. The City of Kingston's participation in this campaign is an acknowledgement of our values and the work that the City is already undertaking. No additional activities by the City are required to be a part of this campaign.

The purpose of this report is to provide some background information to Council to support the City of Kingston joining this campaign.

**Recommendation:**

**That** Council demonstrate its commitment to being a welcoming community that values inclusiveness and diversity through pledging support to the UNHCR's Cities #With Refugees campaign.

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**Authorizing Signatures:**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

**Lanie Hurdle, Interim Chief  
Administrative Officer**

**Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:**

Peter Huigenbos, Acting Commissioner, Community Services

Brad Joyce, Acting Commissioner, Corporate Services

Not required

Jim Keech, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston

Not required

Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer

Not required

Sheila Kidd, Commissioner, Transportation & Public Works

Not required

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**Options/Discussion:****The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**

The UNHCR was established in 1950 and is the world's leading organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people. UNHCR works to ensure that everyone has the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge, having fled violence, persecution, war or disaster at home.

**Cities #With Refugees**

This initiative began in 2018 to invite cities and local authorities around the world who are working to promote inclusion, support refugees and bring communities together to sign a statement of solidarity #WithRefugees. The UNHCR's "[Global Trends Report](#)" highlights that, of the 71 million refugees around the world, two out of three settle initially in urban areas making the role of cities vital in successful refugee settlement.

There have been more than 200 cities around the world, including eleven in Canada, that have already made a global declaration of support for refugees. These cities have recognized that when refugees make their cities home, they become part of the fabric of neighbourhoods, contributing to the health of the local economy and making our communities more diverse.

**Refugees in Kingston**

Kingston continues to receive and welcome refugees in the community each year through both private sponsorship (PSRs) and government assisted sponsorship (GARs). Kingston has welcomed approximately 600 refugees over the past three year period. Table 1 shows the number of refugees and their country of origin since the Syrian refugee movement began in 2016.

Immigrant Services for Kingston and Area (ISKA) and the KEYS Job Centre continue to support these newcomers when they arrive in our community. The City of Kingston provides resources such as initial transit passes, transit training, and recreation trial passes in the "Welcome Kits" distributed to all newcomers.

The City actively participates in the Kingston Immigration Partnership (KIP) to ensure proper supports are in place for newcomers and the service system is working collaboratively to address any needs as they arise. KIP took the lead working with the City on the "Say Hello" campaign in 2018 which was aimed at raising awareness and understanding of racism and discrimination in the community. Say Hello (part 2) has received funding from the Community Foundation and will be rolled out to the community in the next few months.

KIP is also a key partner in the City's Workforce Development Strategy to provide supports to ensure that employers and newcomers have the resources and training needed for successful employment of newcomers.

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Table 1: Refugee Arrivals in Kingston September 2016 - September 2019

Country of Origin	# of GARs	# of PSRs	Year of Arrival	Total
Burundi	5	7	2016	172
Syria	109	51		
Afghanistan	4	3	2017	105
Eritrea	15	5		
Iraq	4	0		
Sudan	6	0		
Syria	43	25		
Afghanistan	1	5	2018	166
Burundi	10	4		
Congo	6	0		
Eritrea	19	30		
Ethiopia	1	0		
Iraq	12	0		
Rwanda	15	0		
Somalia	10	0		
Sudan	1	0		
Syria	25	27	2019 (to Sept 30)	153
Afghanistan	13	0		
Bangladesh	1	0		
Congo	4	3		
Eritrea	5	0		
Iraq	4	0		
Pakistan	0	6		
Somalia	22	0		
Sudan	2	5		
Syria	59	17		
Turkey	11	0		
Uganda	1	0		
<b>Total</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>188</b>		<b>596</b>

**Existing Policy/By-Law:**

Not Applicable

**Notice Provisions:**

Not Applicable

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**Accessibility Considerations:**

Not Applicable

**Financial Considerations:**

Not Applicable

**Contacts:**

Cheryl Hitchen, Social Policy & Strategic Community Development Manager 613-546-4291  
extension 4806

**Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:**

Not applicable

**Exhibits Attached:**

Exhibit A – Correspondence from the UNHCR



# UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

Exhibit A to Report Number 19-300

UNHCR Representation in CANADA  
Représentation du HCR au CANADA

280 Albert Street, Suite 401  
Ottawa, Ontario CANADA K1P 5G8

Tel. /Tél.: (613) 232 0909  
Fax / Téléc.: (613) 230 1855  
Email / Courriel: [canot@unhcr.org](mailto:canot@unhcr.org)

Our/Notre Code: CANOT/121/19

25 October, 2019

Dear Mr. Mayor Paterson,

I am writing to you on behalf of the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to thank you for your advocacy for resettlement of hundreds of refugees in Kingston. The UNHCR is also impressed by the city's support of refugees through different programs such as the Community Refugee Relief Fund or the Kingston Community Health Centre's Immigrant services.

While Canadians have been on the forefront of the refugee response by supporting resettlement and inviting refugees into their homes through private sponsorship, it is critical to continue standing up for the rights of refugees and refugee claimants.

A majority of the world's 25.9 million refugees live out of camps and in cities and urban areas across the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Finding themselves on the frontlines of the global refugee response, an increasing number of cities are choosing to empower refugees and embrace the opportunities they bring.

In this regard, I would like to invite Kingston to sign our Cities #WithRefugees pledge, alongside 200 other cities in the world. This global initiative invites cities all over the world to promote inclusion and openness by joining in a statement of solidarity with refugees. We are grateful for Kingston's positive attitude towards refugees and encourage your city to join the Canadian cities that have already signed this pledge (Saskatoon, Port Moody, Vancouver, Guelph, Gatineau, Prince Albert, Rimouski, Victoria, Summerland, Surrey and Toronto). We would be delighted to count on Kingston in 2019 and encourage your city council to visit our website to find out more about how to get involved: <https://www.unhcr.org/withrefugees/cities/>

I hope you will consider my request positively and I remain at your disposal for any additional information that you might require.

*With sincere hopes that your city will join our campaign as a testament of all you have been doing for refugees...*

Sincerely,

Jean -Nicolas Beuze  
UNHCR Representative in Canada

His Worship Bryan Paterson  
Mayor of Kingston  
City Hall  
216 Ontario Street  
Kingston, ON K7L 2Z3  
Canada