

World Refugee Day – Letter of Solidarity –

On World Refugee Day 2018, we, mayors and local authorities from around the world, stand #WithRefugees. The role of towns, cities and counties in creating inclusive communities and promoting hope has never been as important.

Today, over 25 million¹ people worldwide are living outside their countries to escape violence and persecution. Refugees leave nearly everything behind to seek safety: their homes, their jobs, and sometimes even their families. Despite the unimaginable sacrifices refugees make to find safety, many keep their hopes and dreams for the future. Refugees' will to survive and their drive to help their families and communities prosper are not easily extinguished by adversity.

When refugees arrive to a new country, nearly two out of three settle in an urban area. As cities, we are undeniably at the forefront of refugee crises, and our communities benefit from their tenacity and courage. Welcoming refugees creates opportunities for economic, civic and social growth. The diversity of experiences and ideas refugees bring spurs creativity and innovation. For example, both Albert Einstein and Sergey Brin were refugees. Their contributions did not just change our communities; they changed the course of human history.

As cities, we are constantly working to improve our infrastructure, services, and administrative systems in order to meet governance challenges, such as incorporating large inflows of new residents. This work is critical to our shared future. As leaders, we have a responsibility to receive and include new residents with care in order for our cities to become stronger and more resilient to change. Ultimately, those among us who rise to this call for leadership will reap the benefits of societies that are the most productive, the most modern, and the most filled with promise.

As local authorities, we shoulder the enormous responsibility of providing access to housing, health care, education, skills training, and employment opportunities for newcomers and long-term residents alike. Solutions to refugee crises start at the local level and require that everyone plays a part: every city, every neighbourhood, and every individual can contribute. As leaders, we must create spaces where everyone can live in safety, become self-reliant, and contribute to and participate in their local community.

The vital work that cities do can be a model for others, forging a path forward as national governments create and adopt a Global Compact on Refugees to strengthen international crisis response. Our work as mayors and city authorities is primarily local, but when we are united in purpose with each other and our refugee residents, the impact of our solidarity will be global.

Join us and stand #WithRefugees. Together we can make a world of difference.

Add your city to the solidarity statement.

¹ <http://www.unhcr.org/5943e8a34.pdf>

Cities #WithRefugees*:

Albury City, Australia	Metropolis, IL, USA
Amsterdam, Netherlands	Mexico City, Mexico
Athens, Greece	Montevideo, Uruguay
Bankstown, Australia	Montgomery County, MD
Barcelona, Spain	Namur, Belgium
Berlin, Germany	New York, NY, USA
Bradford, UK	Nicosia, Cyprus
Braga, Portugal	Paterson, NJ, USA
Brighton, UK	Providence, RI, USA
Brussels, Belgium	Randwick, Australia
Byron, Australia	Rochester, NY, USA
Cardinia, Australia	Ryde, Australia
Chicago, IL, USA	Saltillo, Mexico
Chula Vista, CA, USA	São Paulo, Brazil
Dallas, TX, USA	Saskatoon, Canada
Darebin, Australia	Sheffield, UK
Galway, Ireland	St. Louis, MO, USA
Greater Dandenong, Australia	St. Paul, MN, USA
Guadalajara, Mexico	Sydney, Australia
Hobart, Australia	Tapachula, Mexico
Jackson, WY, USA	Tenosique, Mexico
Lane Cove, Australia	Torino, Italy
Leicester, UK	Union City, CA, USA
Ljubljana, Slovenia	Victoria, Canada
Los Angeles, CA, USA	Vienna, Austria
Madison, WI, USA	Warsaw, Poland
Manchester, UK	Whittlesea, Australia
Melbourne, Australia	

** As of 9 am CET the Cities #WithRefugees included are the above-mentioned.*