Dear Mayor Bratina,

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Pal Chideya and I am writing to you on behalf of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) here in Ottawa.

UNHCR has been in existence since 1951 and is the UN body responsible for providing refugees worldwide with protection and assistance, whenever and wherever they need it most. We are working in 117 countries, and have had an office here in Ottawa since 1976.

2011 is a special commemorative year as it marks the 60th Anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention. While UNHCR will be using this milestone to call on the public globally to reaffirm their support for refugees, World Refugee Day (20 June 2011) will also be as in past years an occasion to highlight the positive contributions that refugees make to their host society.

We are interested in exploring with you the possibility of:

1) a Proclamation Ceremony or
2) a UNHCR flag raising ceremony on 20 June or
3) lighting Parliament City Hall in Blue on the occasion of World Refugee Day, or
4) hanging World Refugee Day banners in your building to show solidarity with refugees, not only all over the world, but Canada has played host to many that now consider it home.

One of UNHCR’s goals in Canada is to raise public awareness of the plight of approximately 17 million refugees around the world. We would like to use World Refugee Day as an occasion to draw the public’s attention to the work of the UN Refugee Agency, and to the needs of refugees.
If this is of interest to you, please feel free to get in touch with me and I will send you our proclamation template. My supervisor and I will be happy to answer any questions you might have.

For your reference, I have also attached our '1 is too many' Campaign which kicks off a series of Commemorations we have this special year.

For any other information you might need, please refer to http://www.unhcr.ca/wrd/

Thank you once again for your attention.

Warmest regards,

Pai Chideya

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