



Office of the Mayor

CONSENT CALENDAR
June 28, 2022

To: Honorable Members of the City Council

From: Mayor Jesse Arreguín (Author), Councilmember Susan Wengraf (Co-Sponsor), Councilmember Sophie Hahn (Co-Sponsor)

Subject: Suspension of Sister City Relations with Dmitrov, Russia and Ulan-Ude, Russia

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution to suspend Sister City relations with the cities of Dmitrov, Russia and Ulan-Ude until Russian hostilities against Ukraine come to an end.

BACKGROUND

The City of Berkeley currently has 17 Sister City relationships, including two in Russia. Dmitrov, located just north of Moscow, was established in 1991, and Ulan-Ude, located in Siberia near Lake Baikal, was established in 1992. Despite an initial warm response to the establishment of these Sister Cities, there has been no known formal communication between Berkeley and Dmitrov and Ulan-Ude since the early 1990s.

On February 24, 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin initiated a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, sparking international outrage. At least 15 million civilians, out of a population of around 40 million, have been displaced so far. Entire cities have been flattened from indiscriminate bombing. The United Nations has verified at least 4,183 civilian deaths as of June 3, but concedes that the actual number is significantly higher. According to Ukraine's top prosecutor, 15,000 war crimes have allegedly been committed with 200-300 war crimes being reported daily. The International Criminal Court is currently investigating such allegations, and war crime trials are already taking place within Ukraine by their national government. As of early June, 2022, Russia is estimated to occupy about 20% of Ukrainian territory, mostly in the southeastern Black Sea area and the eastern Donbas region, which has been in a state of war with Russian-backed separatists since 2014. Also in 2014, Russia forcefully annexed the southern region of Crimea from Ukraine.

On June 4, 2022, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky spoke at the 90th annual US Conference of Mayors meeting, calling upon US cities to sever ties with Russian sister cities. As of April 21, an estimated 10% of US-Russian sister city relations have been suspended or ended.

Since the War in Ukraine started, Berkeley has taken multiple actions to support the people of Ukraine and oppose Russia's aggression. Just two days before the invasion

began, the Council passed an urgency item in support of Ukraine and its territorial integrity. The Ukrainian flag was authorized to fly at the Civic Center flagpole during the first month of the war, with two rallies taking place that brought together the local Ukrainian diaspora. On June 14, the Council adopted a Resolution urging an immediate ceasefire in the War in Ukraine and to convene peaceful negotiations to bring an end to hostilities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

There are no environmental impacts associated with the recommendations in this report.

CONTACT PERSON

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Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

SUSPENSION OF SISTER CITY STATUS WITH DMITROV AND ULAN-UDE

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley currently has 17 Sister Cities, which are designed to promote human rights, culture, and education through peaceful exchanges; and

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley has two Sister Cities that are located in Russia – Dmitrov which was established through Resolution No. 55,889-N.S. on May 21, 1991, and Ulan-Ude which was established through Resolution NO. 56,236-N.S on January 7, 1992; and

WHEREAS, on February 24, 2022, Russia initiated a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which to date has displaced over 15 million people, killed thousands of civilians, and allegedly has resulted in thousands of war crimes which are currently being investigated; and

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley has taken multiple steps since February to support Ukraine and oppose Russian aggression, including an urgency resolution that supports the country's territorial integrity, rallies and Ukrainian flag raisings, and calls for an immediate ceasefire; and

WHEREAS, on June 3, Ukrainian President President Volodymyr Zelensky spoke at the 90th annual US Conference of Mayors meeting, calling upon US cities to sever ties with Russian sister cities; and

WHEREAS, having active Sister Cities with cities in countries whose governments have committed unprovoked acts of war and are allegedly committing active acts of war crimes is antithetical to Berkeley values.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that it hereby suspends its Sister City status with the cities of Dmitrov, Russia, and Ulan-Ude, Russia until Russian hostilities against Ukraine come to an end.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this action is not to be considered a referendum against the citizens of Dmitrov and Ulan-Ude, but serves as a statement of opposition to the Russian government's invasion of Ukraine.

