

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Hamilton-Erbil Sister City Proposal

From: Rastee D. Koyee <rastee.ali@koyauniversity.org>

Sent: March 4, 2019 7:59 PM

To: Office of the Mayor <mayor@hamilton.ca>

Cc: Paparella, Stephanie <Stephanie.Paparella@hamilton.ca>; Peshawa Jammal Muhammadali <peshawa.jammal@koyauniversity.org>

Subject: Hamilton-Erbil Sister City Proposal

Dear Mr. Eisenberger,

attached to this message is Hamilton-Erbil Sister City Proposal for your kind remarks. The notion of having an agreement between both city mayors on many mutually interesting aspects derived from a fact that we firmly believe though the implementation of alike projects we can promote cultural and commercial ties between peoples of the Canada and Iraq in general and residents of Hamilton City and Erbil in particular.

We are looking forward to receive your kind feedback at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Dr.-Ing. Rastee D. Ali
 Director of the Career Development Directorate
 Lecturer at the Department of Manufacturing Engineering
 Koya University
 Danielle Mitterrand Boulevard 10
 44023 Koysinjaq
 Kurdistan - Iraq
 Email: rastee.ali@koyauniversity.org; rasteedelshad@yahoo.com
 Mob.: (+964)7509706535/7736982884
<https://sites.google.com/a/koyauniversity.org/dcs/home>
<https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=mdxC-fMAAAAJ&hl=en&authuser=1>

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Establishing Sister City Relationship

**Between Hamilton City, Ontario, Canada
and Erbil, Kurdistan Region-Iraq**

The aim of this proposal is to invite Hamilton City to investigate the aspects of establishing a Sister City Relationship with Erbil City in Kurdistan Region-Iraq, and name the potential areas of cooperation between both cities. As Erbil is considered the real capital of Iraq's economy that constantly attracts foreign investors, we believe that any form of agreement should escape the "arranged marriage" context and special emphases have to be given to work on promoting sustainable economic ties between both cities. More areas of focus as well as operational structure of the project is being provided for mutual negotiations.





About Erbil

in Kurdistan Region-Iraq

Erbil, also spelled Arbīl or Irbīl, Assyrian Arba-ilu, Greek Arbela, Kurdish Hawler or Hewler, city, capital of Erbil muḥāfazāh (governorate), northern Iraq. The city is also the capital of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq and is among the largest cities in that country. It is one of the most ancient cities in the world, dating back at least to 2300 BCE. Erbil has long been an important trade centre, with roads south to Arab Iraq and abroad to Turkey, Iran, and Syria. The famous Hamilton Road (constructed under British rule in 1928–32 by Archibald M. Hamilton) runs from Erbil through the mountains and canyons northeast to the Iranian border. Erbil is the birthplace of Ibn Khallikān (1211–82), the Muslim jurist famous as the compiler of a great biographical dictionary of Arab scholars, and, in modern times, İhsan Doğramacı (1915–2010), a famous Turkish physician and educational administrator, and Abdulla Pashew (born 1946), an eminent Kurdish poet. Pop. (2015 est.) 879,000.



Erbil, capital of Erbil governorate, Iraq.



History

Over the millennia, Erbil has been ruled by such empires as those of the Sumerians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Medians, and Achaemenids and later the Sassanid Persians, Greeks, Parthians, Arabs, and Ottomans. Erbil was already an ancient city when Alexander the Great famously defeated the Persian king Darius III some 50 miles (80 km) northwest of it at the Battle of Gaugamela, also known as the Battle of Arbela (Erbil), in 331 BCE.

The city was an early centre of Christianity, and a small number of Christians still live there and in such nearby wealthy subdistricts as Ankawa (Arabic: *ʿAyn Kāwah*). The Muslims conquered Erbil in the 7th century, but it was not until Erbil was razed by the Turkic conqueror Timur (Tamerlane) in the late 14th century that it became largely Muslim. The city had already been superseded in economic importance by Mosul (some 50 miles to the west) by the 1200s, but it remained an important regional centre in the centuries that followed.

The infrastructure of the city and governorate of Erbil were largely ignored under Iraqi rule after World War I and suffered greatly during the Kurdish struggle against Saddam Hussein in the 1970s and later. Saddam's defeat at the end of the Persian Gulf War (1990–91) led to the establishment of the autonomous Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in northern Iraq. However, Erbil continued to suffer economically as a result of the economic blockade imposed upon it by Saddam and by UN sanctions against Iraq. From 1994–98 the city also suffered from internecine fighting between the two main Kurdish parties, Masoud Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

In contrast to the horrific violence in Arab Iraq that followed the U.S.-led invasion in 2003 (see Iraq War), Erbil and the rest of the region administered by the Kurdish Regional Government have largely been spared. However, Muhammad "Sami" Abdul Rahman, a well-known Kurdish leader, and more than 100 other people were killed by a bomb that was detonated at an important reception in February 2004; Islamic extremists took credit for the atrocity.

The Contemporary City

Erbil possesses a semiarid climate with low humidity in summer and moderate humidity in winter. It has hot and dry days in the summer with temperatures reaching about 100 °F (40 °C) but cools off pleasantly in the evenings. Temperatures often reach 32 °F (0 °C) in the winter.

Erbil's Kurdish Sunni Muslim majority speaks the Sōrānī Kurdish dialect. Other ethnic groups in the city include the Turkmen and Arabs. Other religious groups include Shiite Muslims, Assyrian and Chaldean Catholic Christians, Yazidis, and Kākā'īs. Although Assyrian and Chaldean Christians speak dialects of Aramaic, culturally they have much in common with the Kurds. In the past there also was an important Jewish presence in Erbil, the last remnants of which departed after the creation of the State of Israel in 1948.

Under the KRG much power is devolved, so officials at the governorate, district, and subdistrict levels have considerable authority to implement local projects and services. The city of Erbil is administered as a district, headed by a qā'im-maqām (mayor).

Since the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003, Erbil has experienced an incredible economic boom that has brought tall buildings, modern housing, expensive hotels, new well-paved two- and four-lane roads, shopping centres, excellent restaurants, parks, and a hospital.



Erbil's main industry is the construction of roads and buildings, propped up by foreign oil companies contracted to drill oil in Kurdistan. Turkish business investments have led the construction frenzy, but other countries are also involved, including the United States, Lebanon, South Korea, Iran, Britain, France, and the United Arab Emirates. There is virtually no manufacturing in Erbil. Most businesspeople are merchants, buying and selling food and services connected mostly with the construction industry. Banking services have been established and a stock exchange is under development. Taxis and buses provide public transportation. As an oil-based rentier economy preparing to diversify into a business and tourist destination, Erbil has garnered comparisons to Dubai. Erbil has 30 foreign diplomatic representations, including 18 full consulates general. The KRG parliament building is architecturally impressive even if the institution itself is less so.

Erbil's original airport, constructed in the 1970s, was opened for international flights in 2005. Operations shifted to a newly constructed airport in 2010. The new facility has one of the longest runways in the world, approximately 3 miles (4.8 km) long, and has scheduled flights to several airports in the Middle East and Europe.

Erbil has a primary and secondary education system modeled on that of the British. Public schools are badly overcrowded, and many students can only attend three hours per day. There also are private primary and secondary schools. The city is host to

- Salahaddin University: Founded in 1968 in Sulaymaniya and transferred to Erbil in 1981
- Erbil Polytechnic University: Founded in 1993, embracing 3 colleges and 8 technical institutes
- Hawler Medical University: Founded in 2005
- University of Kurdistan Hewlêr: Public English-medium university
- Tishik University: Private university
- Cihan University: Private university
- BMU Lebanese French University: Private university
- Catholic University of Erbil: Private university
- International University of Erbil: Private university

Erbil's famous citadel, designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2014, covers more than 1.1 million square feet (100,000 square metres) and sits some 100 feet (30 metres) above its immediate surroundings. It is situated upon a tell, or mound, formed by successive historical periods of construction over the centuries, a common pattern in Middle Eastern archaeology. An impressive textile museum containing a collection of old handmade carpets from Iraqi Kurdistan is located in the citadel. The other significant museum in Erbil, the Erbil Civilization Museum, houses some artifacts discovered in the area. A huge seated statue of Ibn al-Mustawfi (1169–1239), a famous Kurdish historian, sits at the citadel's base. Just south of the citadel is the Qaysari Bazaar, a rambling covered market of small narrow alleys with boutiques selling ready-made clothes and colourful imported fabrics for making women's dresses and other items. On its western edge the city also boasts the impressive Muẓaffariyyah Minaret (Kurdish Choly Minara), constructed in 1190–1232 and reaching a height of 120 feet (36 metres).

Erbil (once declared Tourism Capital for the Middle East region for 2014) is also ranks among the top five safest cities in the world according to data collected from Numbeo. Despite being in a region surrounded by war and instability, it is a popular tourist destination for many people from Iraqi provinces and other cities in the Middle East due to its safety and religious tolerance.



Erbil Citadel

There are currently 36 foreign representations in Erbil. These representations include:

1. Consulate General of the United States of America
2. Consulate General of the Russian Federation
3. Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany
4. Consulate General of the Republic of France
5. Consulate General of the People's Republic of China
6. Consulate General of the United Kingdom
7. Consulate General of the Republic of Turkey
8. Consulate General of the Islamic Republic of Iran – Erbil
9. Consulate General of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
10. Consulate of the Arab Republic of Egypt
11. Consulate General of the State of Palestine
12. Consulate General of the United Arab Emirates
13. Consulate General of the Czech Republic
14. Consulate General of the Republic of Sudan
15. Consulate General of the Republic of Hungary
16. Consulate General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
17. Consulate General of the State of Kuwait
18. Consulate of the Republic of Italy
19. Consulate General of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
20. Consulate General of the Republic of India



21. Consulate General of the Hellenic Republic
22. Consulate of the Republic of Korea
23. Embassy Office of the Kingdom of Sweden
24. Consular Office of Romania
25. Consulate Agency of the Republic of Poland
26. Commercial Office of the Republic of Austria
27. Commercial Office of the Republic of Bulgaria
28. Embassy Office of Japan
29. EU Delegation - Erbil Liaison Office
30. Embassy Trade Office of Canada
31. Honorary Consul of the Kingdom of Spain
32. Honorary Consul of the Kingdom of Denmark
33. Honorary Consulate of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
34. Honorary Consul of the Republic of Belarus
35. Honorary Consul of the Republic of Slovakia
36. Honorary Consul of the Federal Republic of Brazil

Over the past 13 years, local and foreign investors have contributed more than \$44.4 billion in different sectors of the Kurdistan Region, according to data from the Investment Board, half of which is being invested in Erbil alone. Within that data, \$38.5 billion belonged to local companies, and \$5.9 billion to foreign investors from 23 different countries. Among the foreign investors, the United Arab Emirates was top with \$3.1 billion, followed by Turkey with \$1.2 billion, Lebanon's \$1 billion, Egypt at \$150 million and the United States at \$116 million. As the Kurdistan Region suffered a critical economic crisis from 2014 until 2017, investment in Kurdistan Region grew from \$712M to US\$3.6 billion in 2018.

It is worth mentioning here that most of the foreign companies, humanitarian NGOs and many educational institutions establish their main offices in Erbil and then consider opening a branch office in Baghdad and other Iraqi cities, believing that the stability in the Kurdistan Region could guarantee their businesses better.

About Sister City Agreement

Sister City is the link that unites, in a spirit of equality and reciprocity, entire nations of two or more countries to support personal contact, exchange ideas, techniques, products. It is an instrument of popular culture and international civic education, and it cannot be diverted from its purpose for personal or party political or political aims. Town twinning has been said to involve relatively formal relationships that are also relatively long-term, open, inclusive, and equal in character. These individual characteristics have been said to be logically interdependent. Formal relationships are meant to last longer than informal relationships. Long-term relationships are meant to allow for more openness and inclusiveness than short-term relationships. Open and inclusive relationships are meant to promote equality more than closed and exclusive relationships. We return to this second, narrower definition in the section below headed 'Questions, tensions, challenges'. The rest of this document takes the first, broader definition of town twinning.

City officials or staff and interested community members or organizations from both cities may periodically keep in contact for the purpose of discussing topics of mutual interest. Generally, the process can be summarized as follow:



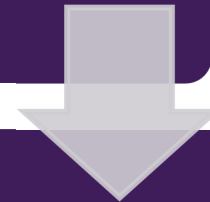
Idea Request

Anyone can have an idea for a Sister City proposal.



Staff Contact and Visit

It is important to identify a person to be your main contact and arrange for an exchange of visit(s)



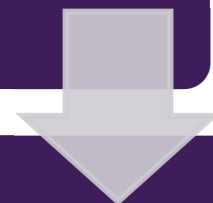
Application

You and your City contact should complete an application outlining the rationale and goals for a Sister City relationship.



City Council Consideration

Your completed Application will be routed to City Council through the City manager. If Council approves the idea they will pass a Resolution.



Develop Agreement

If City Council passes a resolution then a formal Agreement will be drafted stating the Sister City goals, project implementation, and reporting responsibilities. Followed by Annual Check-in and Reporting

Procedure Outline of Sister City Agreement



Context and Objectives

In the Sister City agreement context, Erbil City in Kurdistan-Iraq is pleased to offer to Hamilton City a proposal of Sister City agreement on the basis that can be generally set out:

- (a) to promote goodwill and mutual understanding between the citizens of the Canada and Iraqi nations;
- (b) to contribute to the peace of the world.

The benefits attributed from these links is in accordance with our firm believe in the following declared statement: “Go to the people. Live with them. Learn from them. Begin with what they know. Build with what they have. Be committed. But of the true leader, when the work is done, the task is accomplished, people will say ‘we did it ourselves’.”

The main objectives are to enable:

Economic Ties

- To promote business familiarization tours of both parts.
- To collaborate around specialized expertise, highly skilled labor, location and connectivity, so that city leaders can find their competitive niche to thrive in the global economy.
- To forge strategic trade and economic ties for successful business development.
- To enter first of its-kind city-to-city trade agreement.

Educational, Art and Recreational Exchanges

- To foster and advance the knowledge of our people.
- To ensure more language exchanges occur on a regular basis.
- To establish reciprocal exchanges between interested groups and individuals to develop new and existing pursuits.

Publicity

- To actively promote continued support from media, and other promotional groups to increase citizen awareness and benefits of each Sister City relationship.

Civic Contacts

- To strengthen the Official Associations between Erbil City in Kurdistan-Iraq and Hamilton City.

Common Aspirations

- To encourage community involvement, involving recreational and other pursuits particularly in activities and areas where common activities and pursuits are identified.

Culture Exchanges

- To host and exchange culture groups from the two nations. Also promoting our Christian and Muslim culture to each country.

Information Exchanges

- To foster the ongoing people to people, exchange of knowledge and ideas.

Academic Exchanges

- The signing of two educational agreements, including a Memorandum of Understanding between The University of Ontario Institute of Technology and one of the above mentioned Erbil universities.



Operational Structure

While we believe that in long-terms, such pacts should not just be municipality-to-municipality partnerships, both cities should have an opportunity to strategically align fragmented bilateral partnerships—city-to-city, business-to-business, chamber-to-chamber, university-to-university—into a more cohesive, comprehensive approach for boosting shared growth across two markets. To ensure that the Sister City relationships can be operated in an active and positive way, it is important for a local committee to be established to ensure the achievement of the Council's aims and objectives. On our side, a follow-up committee can be conceived as follow:

| No. | Position | Committee rank |
|-----|--|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Mayor of Erbil | Head of the Committee |
| 2 | Director General of Erbil Municipalities | Rapporteur of the Committee |
| 3 | Director of Erbil Chamber of Commerce & Industry | Member |
| 4 | Director General of Erbil's Educational Directorate | Member |
| 5 | Director General of Erbil's Cultural and Art Directorate | Member |
| 6 | A President of one of the Erbil public universities | Member (interchangeably) |
| 7 | Owner of the idea and focal coordination personnel | Member (Dr.-Ing. Rastee D. Ali) |

Worth mentioning here that, Mr. Peshawa Jammal M. Ali (Head of the Department of Software Engineering at Koya University) will be responsible on all publicity and information exchange aspects of the project. Summarizing the purpose of the follow-up committee on our side:

1. To ensure active relationships are established and maintained.
2. To have final say, i.e. to approve exchanges, visits and activities.
3. To promote awareness of the Sister City relationships.
4. To foster and encourage exchanges.
5. To generate tangible returns.
6. To identify non-tangible returns.
7. To coordinate activities.
8. To advise on protocol, arrangements and procedures.
9. To ensure that each sector represented on the committee actively promotes involvement in the Sister City agreement and to report back on, and quantify achievements.

Finally, while we are thankful to Paul Gibbard (Ambassador of Canada to Iraq) efforts in advance, we are looking forward that within the context of alike projects, we will be able to foster both nation's bilateral relations. People in Iraq in general and in Kurdistan Region in particular are having a very positive image of the Canada in their cautious minds and on the opposite side this could be regarded true as well.

Author: Dr.-Ing. Rastee D. Ali
 Director of the Career Development Directorate
 Lecturer at the Department of Manufacturing Engineering
 Koya University
 Danielle Mitterrand Boulevard 10
 44023 Koysinjaq, Erbil
 Kurdistan Region - Iraq
 Email: rastee.ali@koyauniversity.org
 Mob.: (+964)7509706535/7736982884