



neighbourhood pods TO

December 17th 2024.

Ms. Olivia Chow
Mayor
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen St. W.
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
mayor_chow@toronto.ca

RE: Call to Action: Adoption of Toronto Ombudsman Recommendations on Refugee Claimant Shelter Access - CC24.1 - Ombudsman Toronto Report - An Investigation into the City's Decision to Stop Allowing Refugee Claimants into Base Shelter System Beds

Dear Mayor Chow and Members of City Council,

We are writing on behalf of **Neighbourhood Pods TO (NPTO)** to support the urgent call by the **Crisis in Our City Network** and the **African Canadian Collective (ACC)** for the City of Toronto to adopt the recommendations outlined in the **Toronto Ombudsman's report**.

The report exposes systemic failures, including:

- **Exclusionary Practices:** Refugee claimants were unjustly denied access to shelter services, violating Toronto's stated principles of **universal access** under the AccesTO policy.
- **Lack of Transparency:** The City failed to communicate its decisions clearly to stakeholders and impacted communities.
- **Harmful Consequences:** Vulnerable populations, including racialized and newcomer groups, faced compounded challenges due to these policies.

The Crisis in Our City Network has emphasized the need for **inclusive decision-making and stakeholder engagement**, while the African Canadian Collective has drawn attention to the disproportionate impact on African and Black communities, particularly in light of Canada's obligations under the **United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent**.

We respectfully urge City Council to:

1. **Publicly commit to implementing the Ombudsman's recommendations** in their entirety.
2. **Develop a detailed implementation plan** with clear timelines, milestones, and accountability measures.
3. **Engage meaningfully with community organizations** like NPTO, the Crisis in Our City Network, and the African Canadian Collective to ensure equitable and transparent execution.

These recommendations provide a clear roadmap to address systemic inequities and restore trust in the City's shelter system. Failure to act risks further harm to vulnerable individuals and undermines Toronto's commitments to equity and human rights.

NPTO remains dedicated to collaborating with the City and its partners to ensure that these necessary reforms are implemented. Together, we can build a Toronto that truly reflects the values of fairness, inclusion, and human dignity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Walied Khogali Ali', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Walied Khogali Ali

Coordinator

Neighbourhood Pods TO (NPTO)

The Neighbourhood Pods TO (NPTO) embodies a consortium of grassroots organizations, community workers, and advocates, all rallying under a unified mission to bolster the economic livelihoods and enhance the overall well-being of low-income individuals and communities across Toronto.