

MOTION: TWINNING FOR PALESTINE

We call upon LAW members to endeavour to twin their home towns with towns in Palestine. This is to assist in development and try to check Israeli settler expansion, through making connections at the most local level between British citizens and Palestinians.

The UK created Israel and bears a unique responsibility for facilitating the Zionist project. Even to the point it failed most miserably to support Jews fleeing from Nazi Germany whilst simultaneously supporting their (forced) relocation to the Middle East. By so doing, the misfortune the Palestinians have experienced from the Nakba on, can be squarely laid at the door of imperial machinations. To help to begin to redress the historical wrongs done to the Palestinians, LAW calls upon its members to use petitions and local motions to lobby for UK cities to engage with twinning for Palestine.

Moyle Council in the north of Ireland twinned with Gaza in 2012 and helped with tourism, sport, football, health care, women's issues, library management, parks improvement, sewage processing and education. Moyle Council is no longer, but to Gazans it was welcome support. Glasgow is twinned with Bethlehem. The more UK cities that twin with Palestinian towns the less isolated these communities will be.

Hand in hand with this commitment to help Palestine is a commitment to freedom of speech. There will be those who will seek to obstruct twinning efforts, claiming that Hamas or Fatah represent views or commit actions that prohibit support. We note that in Edinburgh, the local PSC Branch has refused to support Pete Gregson's Council petition to twin Edinburgh with Gaza City because it would mean supporting contact with Hamas members. We believe such an absolutist position to be wrong and unhelpful. It is tragic that Edinburgh PSC reject Hamas because of their political views and actions. We at LAW affirm our commitment to respecting other's views, as long as the greater good is being served and our constitutional values are maintained. We suggest to LAW members they learn about one way to lobby for twinning, by going to tinyurl.com/gazatwinregister

Supporting Palestinians requires working with the party controlling the municipal authority. Opponents claim that a failure to hold elections delegitimises such parties. We need to point out that in WW2 the British held no elections. Palestine is losing the war with Israel. Especially in Gaza. And countries losing wars don't do elections. Hamas were democratically elected last time elections were held. In summary, we call for a twinning movement that will help the Palestinians as it is our duty as British citizens to right historic wrongs. We must do that in every way we can and we must endeavour not to view Arab culture and values through Western eyes. Therein disaster lies, as Zionists prove every day.

Proposed by Pete Gregson, seconded by Jon de Rennes