

Scotsman - Published 26<sup>th</sup> March

## **“Capital’s Jewish community ‘alarmed’ as City Council prepare to discuss twinning link with Edinburgh and Gaza City”**

[www.scotsman.com/news/politics/capitals-jewish-community-alarmed-as-city-council-prepare-to-discuss-twinning-link-with-edinburgh-and-gaza-city-3628537](http://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/capitals-jewish-community-alarmed-as-city-council-prepare-to-discuss-twinning-link-with-edinburgh-and-gaza-city-3628537)

Riposte by Pete Gregson

As the person who has been vilified in this article published today, I feel that I ought to be allowed the opportunity to set the record straight.

The article kicks off with my expulsion from the GMB and the claim of my “abusive behaviour towards a female Jewish Labour member and union employee”? Why, I have never met this woman, so where does this “abusive behaviour” come from?

After I’d told a journalist that I was being suspended for calling Israel a racist endeavour, he called up the GMB and was told it was Rea Wolfson who had lodged a complaint against me. After he told me that, I declared she was a raving Zionist. Why? Ms Wolfson sat on the Labour NEC and with Jon Lansman was instrumental in getting the Party to adopt the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism; I had written to the NEC criticising this act; whereupon she had twigged I was a GMB steward and reported me to Gary Smith, the local union boss for a breach. Under the terms of the IHRA Definition, to say that Israel is a racist endeavour is to make one an anti-Semite. [Readers should note that Amnesty’s recent review concluded that Israel was an apartheid state. So, according to the IHRA definition that the GMB union so slavishly follows, Amnesty is, de facto, a Jew-hating organisation too.]

Anyone who is interested in human rights will begin to realise that we have now lost our freedom of speech to criticise Israel. At my first expulsion hearing, Rabbi Ahron Cohen attended to declare that I was no anti-Semite; the GMB refused to listen to him. Readers can view the Rabbi’s speech if they go to [www.tinyurl.com/gmbihra](http://www.tinyurl.com/gmbihra) and see the video.

And so, because I had said on my website that Ms Wolfson was a raving Zionist for promoting a definition that was not about protecting Jews, but about protecting Israel, the GMB Boss Gary Smith (who seemed to do anything that Ms Wolfson asked of him) added the charge.

But I had simply referenced this person, who had destroyed my prospects as a GMB steward, with a term which I continue to argue is factually correct; for she was until 2015 manager at New Israel Fund, a former president of Oxford University’s Jewish and Israel societies, and the ex-chair of the Zionist Youth Council, which suggests she really is a Zionist. The fact that she acted so brazenly behind the scenes would surely suggest its dictionary definition of “raving” as “used to emphasize a particular quality” as being appropriate in this context.

But to hide behind the defence of exploiting her Jewishness, in the face of political criticism (I didn’t even know she was a Jew) was rank manipulation of GMB disciplinary processes.

The full letter of 13th Dec 2018 from Gary Smith with allegations, along with my responses of 17th Dec, [can be viewed here](#). The minute of my Appeal hearing in London on the 5th March 2019, which Rabbi Cohen and Tony Greenstein attended to speak on my behalf [can be viewed here](#).

In relation to the Scotsman's implied criticism of me for stating "Gregson has claimed Israel was a "racist endeavour" that "exaggerates" the Nazis' murder of six million Jews "for political ends"." I can only say that I used the word here as according to the Merriam-Webster definition of "exaggerates" to mean "to enlarge or increase especially beyond the normal : ie [OVEREMPHASIZE](#)". [Whilst it clearly breaches the IHRA definition, the GMB went further and said this amounted to Holocaust denial! ]

In an effort to justify my statement, I had pointed out to the GMB that of the 11 million killed in the Holocaust, as far as Israel presents history, the slaughter was purely about 6 million Jews. Israeli university courses on the Holocaust ignore non-Jews.

There is no mention of the millions of Russians, Poles, Roma and others murdered en masse. Norman Finkelstein documents Israel's use of the Holocaust as its indispensable ideological weapon in his book "The Holocaust Industry- Reflections on the exploitation of Jewish suffering." Please also see Holocaust survivor Dr. Hajo Meyer's 2010 speech on Israel – "[The Misuse of the Holocaust for Political Purposes](#)".

Even Israelis admit they exploit the Holocaust. Israeli former minister of Education, Shulamit Aloni, said in a US interview that "[anti-Semitism is a trick. We always use it](#)". The interviewer said: "Often, when there is dissent expressed in the United States against policies of the Israeli government, people here are called anti-Semitic. What is your response to that as an Israeli Jew?". Aloni replied: "Well, it's a trick, we always use it. When from Europe somebody is criticizing Israel, then we bring up the Holocaust...."

The GMB refused to accept any of this. Presumably it was to encourage this kind of confusion that Zionists put the condition into the IHRA definition in the first place- and to deter any suggestion that they exploit Holocaust guilt.

The main problem is that Israel continues to use the Holocaust as a justification for vicious attacks against Gaza; in claiming that Hamas wants to wipe it from the face of the map, in the same way that the Nazis exterminated six million Jews in WW2.

But since 1994, Hamas has frequently stated that it would accept a truce if Israel withdraws to the 1967 borders, paid reparations, allowed free elections in the territories and gave [Palestinian refugees the right to return](#). [ [UN resolution 194](#) affirms the Palestinians right to return to the places from which they were driven. It was passed in 1948 and has never been rescinded.]

Hamas's declaration means that Israel's claim that 4 million Israeli Jews will die, in a second Holocaust, if they show any kind of kindness to the Gazans is again, utterly baseless. Yet the Israelis use their supposed vulnerability to lever \$4 Billion each year for armaments from the USA; they, quite simply, exaggerate (ie overemphasise) the Holocaust for political ends.

## UK Lawyers for Israel

The Scotsman refers to the UKLFI letter to Andrew Kerr, as Head of Legal Services at Edinburgh Council, which claims that Edinburgh Councillors would be in breach of the law should they agree to twin with Gaza- but this is an empty threat.

The law to which UKLFI refers to is this one, as promoted in this UK Government press release of 19<sup>th</sup> Nov 2021, issued by the Home Office and Priti Patel MP

( [www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-to-ban-hamas-from-uk](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-to-ban-hamas-from-uk) )

*“Priti Patel has today (19 November) laid before Parliament an order to outlaw the militant Islamist terrorist movement Hamas in its entirety from the UK.*

*Hamas is an organisation which calls for the establishment of a Islamic Palestinian state under Sharia law and has repeatedly called for the destruction of Israel. It has long been involved in significant terrorist violence.*

*The organisation’s military wing is already banned in the UK but following a new assessment the Home Secretary has concluded it should be proscribed in its entirety. This action will support efforts to protect the British public and the international community in the global fight against terrorism. Hamas is already listed in its entirety by the United States and European Union.*

*Proscription makes it a criminal offence to be a member of, or invite support for the group, with those found guilty facing up to 14 years in prison.*

*Today Home Secretary Priti Patel will give a keynote speech on security and counter terrorism at the Heritage Foundation in Washington DC.*

*She will say:*

*Today the UK Government has laid an order in Parliament to proscribe Hamas in its entirety - including its political wing.*

*Hamas has significant terrorist capability, including access to extensive and sophisticated weaponry as well as terrorist training facilities, and it has long been involved in significant terrorist violence.*

*Hamas commits, participates, prepares for and promotes and encourages terrorism. If we tolerate extremism, it will erode the rock of security.*

*Hamas’ military wing was proscribed by the UK in March 2001. At the time it was the Government’s assessment that there was a distinction between the political and military wings of the group. This distinction is now assessed to be artificial, with Hamas as an organisation involved in committing, participating, preparing for, and encouraging acts of terrorism.*

*Proscribing organisations in the UK makes it difficult for extremists to operate. As well as criminalising membership and support, it supports the takedown of online content.*

*Hamas is one of 78 terrorist groups proscribed in the UK and the third proscription order laid by the Home Secretary within the last year.*

*The Home Secretary's decision to proscribe Hamas follows advice from the Proscription Review Group, which brings together experts from across Government including representatives from operational partners and the intelligence community.*

*The proscription order laid before Parliament on 19 November will now be debated and, subject to approval, will come into force on 26 November."*

The sentence that UKLFI claim would put Edinburgh Councillors in breach of the law is this one: *Proscription makes it a criminal offence to be a member of, or invite support for the group, with those found guilty facing up to 14 years in prison.*

The UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI) letter to the Head of Legal Services claims that Gaza City is ruled by Hamas- but it is clearly not.

The city is run by the 11 members of the municipal council selected by other community leaders, but not elected, due to the separation which occurred between Gaza and West Bank after 2007, where after Hamas was democratically elected, Fatah broke away to rule the west Bank. The municipal council is formed every 4 years. (The community leaders are the Gaza strip's decision makers, public figures, local council leaders, advocates, organizations representatives, etc.)

Thus, as the Gaza Municipal Council members are not Hamas members, how can a pledge between our Lord Provost and the Gaza Mayor to encourage twinning activity with Gazan citizens amount to any kind of criminal offence?

The pledge I seek from Tuesday's meeting would read thus:

*"The Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh and the Mayor of Gaza City wish to affirm a twinning treaty. By the affirmation of this treaty the cities of both Edinburgh and Gaza pledge that together,*

- They will actively co-operate to ensure the continuing development of close relationships between the citizens.*
- They promise to facilitate the creation of direct links between institutions and organisations wishing to partake in twinning activity.*
- They will encourage exchanges between young people to ensure succeeding generations learn the history of the relationship between the cities and the role that each has played in its own national history.*
- They will take every opportunity to share skills and knowledge to the benefit of their respective citizens.*
- They undertake to convene regular meetings between representatives in order to evaluate co-operation programmes."*

Does UKLFI really believe that by signing such a pledge that Edinburgh Council is inviting support for Hamas? That a civic twinning agreement calling for co-operation between Edinburgh's 450,000 citizens and Gaza's 590,000 citizens is tantamount to supporting terrorism?

Should UKLFI continue with this baseless claim, I shall engage Michael Mansfield QC to fight the UKLFI on my and Edinburgh Council's behalf. Michael is Jewish and declared in 2012 that the "UN must prosecute Israel for war crimes," (see [www.electronicintifada.net/content/un-must-prosecute-israel-war-crimes-says-bloody-sunday-lawyer/10987](http://www.electronicintifada.net/content/un-must-prosecute-israel-war-crimes-says-bloody-sunday-lawyer/10987) )

Michael is, simply, the best lawyer in the UK. [Wikipedia](#) describes him thus: as an English [barrister](#) and head of chambers at Nexus Chambers. He was recently described as "The king of [human rights](#) work" by [The Legal 500](#) and as a Leading [Silk](#) in [civil liberties](#) and human rights (including actions against the police).

Michael and I have been working together since 2018 on challenging the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism through Judicial Review. We were going to take the GMB to court for my expulsion, and even went so far as to discuss with Sarah Shiels and Sindi Mules of Balfour and Manson in Edinburgh if they would instruct Michael on my behalf (the law decrees that I cannot directly instruct a QC, but must use a solicitor to so do). Michael was of the view that a case in a Scottish Court stood a greater chance of success than in the London Courts (where the GMB's offices were based, for the simple fact that there are far fewer Zionists in Scotland).

In the event Michael and I did not proceed because he came to the conclusion that the GMB, being a private body, was able to expel whoever it liked; freedom of speech legislation only applies to public bodies. The following email exchange confirms this:

**From:** Peter Gregson <[postmaster@roseburn32.plus.com](mailto:postmaster@roseburn32.plus.com)>  
**Sent:** 09 January 2019 20:21  
**To:** 'sarah.shiels@balfour-manson.co.uk' <[sarah.shiels@balfour-manson.co.uk](mailto:sarah.shiels@balfour-manson.co.uk)>; 'sindi.mules@balfour-manson.co.uk' <[sindi.mules@balfour-manson.co.uk](mailto:sindi.mules@balfour-manson.co.uk)>  
**Subject:** FW: FAO Michael Mansfield QC and Practice Managers

Dear Sarah/Sindi,

As you can see, Michael is thinking maybe this could be for the Scottish Courts, after all.

Best wishes

Pete

**From:** Peter Gregson <[postmaster@roseburn32.plus.com](mailto:postmaster@roseburn32.plus.com)>  
**Sent:** 09 January 2019 19:51  
**To:** 'Michael Mansfield' <[Michael.Mansfield@nexuschambers.com](mailto:Michael.Mansfield@nexuschambers.com)>  
**Subject:** RE: FAO Michael Mansfield QC and Practice Managers

Hi Michael,

The final decision to expel me will take place at the GMB HQ in London.

What is happening is that the Scotland Committee are recommending to the Central Executive Council I be expelled. My appeal will be considered by the Central Executive Council. Then they make their decision (which of course will be to expel me).

Since the final decision will be taken in London, does this not make the case an English Court matter, rather than a Scottish one?

Pete

---

**From:** Michael Mansfield <[Michael.Mansfield@nexuschambers.com](mailto:Michael.Mansfield@nexuschambers.com)>

**Sent:** 09 January 2019 18:24

**To:** Peter Gregson <[postmaster@roseburn32.plus.com](mailto:postmaster@roseburn32.plus.com)>

**Subject:** Re: FAO Michael Mansfield QC and Practice Managers

We have a Scots member of chambers who might take this on

My clerks were preparing to let Daniel know because I think it stands more chance in Scotland than London.

**Michael Mansfield QC**

**Nexus The Chambers of Michael Mansfield QC**

**7, New Square**

**Lincoln's Inn**

**London. WC2A 3QS**

**t: [020 7404 1147](tel:02074041147)**

**f: [020 7242 9744](tel:02072429744)**

**w: [nexuschambers.com](http://nexuschambers.com)**

**dx: 391 LDE**

I have absolutely no doubt that Michael would relish taking on the UKLFI in the courts, whether that be in London or Edinburgh.

I shall write to him today to ask if he will take this on, should the UKLFI be stupid enough to take it to court. I imagine Michael will work at cost or possibly even pro-bono, so great is his distaste for the Zionist lobby.

## UKLFI and the Law

The UKLFI and Westminster Government's stance on Hamas is hypocritical. If we in the UK were to be consistent, we would be saying to the Ukrainians that firing rockets at Russians to regain occupied land was terrorist activity and must cease.

After all, Hamas were democratically elected. And under international law, the Palestinians have a lawful right to resist Israel's occupation of their lands, including through armed struggle. In 1982, the UN General Assembly "reaffirmed the legitimacy of the struggle of peoples for independence, territorial integrity, national unity and liberation from colonial and foreign domination and foreign occupation by all available means, including armed struggle."

The most recent attack on Gaza by the Israelis was just 10 months ago, in which 256 Palestinians, including 66 children, were killed; in Israel, 13 people, including two children died. The fighting was triggered by an Israeli landgrab of Palestinian homes in the Sheikh Jarrah district of Jerusalem.

Following the attack, Marjorie Cohn observed in Consortium News in May 2021 ( [www.consortiumnews.com/2021/05/18/israel-isnt-entitled-to-self-defense-against-the-people-under-its-occupation](http://www.consortiumnews.com/2021/05/18/israel-isnt-entitled-to-self-defense-against-the-people-under-its-occupation) ) that "Israel Isn't Entitled to 'Self-Defence' Against the People Under Its Occupation". She goes on to say:

*"As Israel continues to pummel the Palestinian people with bombs and artillery shot into Gaza from troops amassed along its borders in preparation for a ground invasion, the Biden administration has reaffirmed its unwavering support for Israel's war crimes and crimes against humanity against the Palestinians.*

*Israel could not commit its crimes without the overwhelming support of the U.S. government. U.S. officials are aiding and abetting Israel's crimes with massive military aid and scotching any criticism of Israel in the UN Security Council.*

*President Joe Biden said he didn't think Israel's attack on Gaza has been a "significant overreaction." He expressed his "unwavering support" for Israel's "right to defend itself" from rocket attacks from Gaza, but he did not condemn Israel's airstrikes that are killing Palestinian civilians and destroying residential buildings, or the Israeli attacks on worshippers at the Al Aqsa Mosque.*

*"Blanket statements like these with little context or acknowledgement of what precipitated this cycle of violence — namely, the expulsions of Palestinians and attacks on Al Aqsa — dehumanize Palestinians & imply the U.S. will look the other way at human rights violations," Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-New York) tweeted, and said Biden was giving Israel a "green light" to continue its onslaught.*

*"By only stepping in to name Hamas' actions — which are condemnable — and refusing to acknowledge the rights of Palestinians, Biden reinforces the false idea that Palestinians instigated this cycle of violence," Ocasio-Cortez said. "This is not neutral language. It takes a side — the side of occupation."*



Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez criticizing the Biden administration's defense of Israeli attacks on Gaza, May 13. (C-Span)

*Secretary of State Antony Blinken declared that there is a “fundamental difference between a terrorist organization in Hamas that is indiscriminately targeting civilians and Israel, which is defending itself.” But as Raji Sourani, director of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, wrote in an email to this writer, claims like Blinken’s obscure the fact that nearly all of Israel’s targets have been civilians. And the vast majority of those killed have been Palestinians. Moreover, as an occupying power, Israel cannot use military force against the occupied Palestinian people because under international law, the occupier has a duty to protect the territory it occupies.*

*On May 13, Israeli troops bombed the Gaza Strip with artillery, tanks and war planes, and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) prepared at least three brigades of troops for action.*

*Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz, who served as chief of general staff for the IDF during Israel’s 2014 massacre of 2,251 Palestinians in Gaza, threatened to commit additional war crimes. Gantz warned that “Gaza will burn” if Israelis have to sleep in shelters.*



← Tweet



Common Dreams ✓  
@commondreams

...

Benny Gantz's comments "should be entered directly as evidence of war crimes to the International Criminal Court," said one critic.



[commondreams.org](https://commondreams.org)

Israeli Defense Minister Threatens 'Gaza Will Burn' as IDF Readies Plans for Gr...  
Benny Gantz's comments "should be entered directly as evidence of war crimes to the International Criminal Court," said one critic.

3:55 PM · May 13, 2021 · Echobox

22 Retweets · 1 Quote Tweet · 25 Likes



*Hamas has fired rockets into Israel in response to the Israeli attack on worshipers at the holy Al Aqsa Mosque in occupied East Jerusalem. Seven Israelis have been killed. But 120 Palestinians have been killed and 900 people wounded, according to Palestinian health officials.*

*"This is the worst I witnessed in my life," Sourani wrote in his email. "No safe haven in Gaza, so bloody and brutal; all the targets, almost are civilians, the most intention to exert pressure on resistance." Sourani added:*

*"They are terrorizing the two million in Gaza day and night, the peak this morning. We did not believe we will see the sunshine again. Everything is shaking in the house including our bodies. They destroyed the civilian police stations and headquarters, internal security,*

*infrastructure, big building towers, etc. None of these, to the best of our knowledge, has any security significance.”*

### ***Israeli War Crimes in 2014***

*On March 3, 2021, Fatou Bensouda, chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), announced that her office was launching a formal investigation into war crimes committed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip since Israel’s 2014 “Operation Protective Edge,” in which Israeli forces killed 2,251 Palestinians.*

*Bensouda found a reasonable basis to believe that Israeli forces committed the war crimes of willful killing, willfully causing serious injury, disproportionate use of force, and the transfer of Israelis into Palestinian territory. She also found a reasonable basis to investigate possible war crimes by Palestinians, including intentional attacks against civilians, using civilians as human shields, and torture and willful killing.*

*Seven years after Operation Protective Edge, Israeli officials are once again committing war crimes in the occupied Palestinian territories. In its current “Operation Guardian of the Walls,” Israeli leaders are perpetrating the same war crimes as those they committed in 2014.*



August 2014: Palestinian residents walk beside a damaged UN school at the Jabalia refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip after the area was hit by Israeli shelling. (UN Photo)

### ***Israeli Apartheid Is a Crime Against Humanity***

*Under the ICC’s Rome Statute, “inhumane acts committed in the context of an institutional regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over another racial*

*group, with the intent to maintain that regime” constitutes the crime against humanity of apartheid.*

*In 2001, the National Lawyers Guild (NLG) sent a delegation to Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories and subsequently published a report documenting a system of apartheid.*

*Richard Falk, former UN special rapporteur on human rights in the Palestinian territories and professor emeritus at Princeton University, and Virginia Tilley, professor of political science at Southern Illinois University, co-authored a report for the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in 2017. It found “beyond a reasonable doubt” that Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians constitutes “the crime of Apartheid.”*

### UKLFI’s Position on Hamas is Hypocritical

It would appear that UKLFI are comfortable with the ongoing illegal siege of two million people. Can these lawyers really support the wholesale breach of international law to which this collective punishment amounts? Are they for international law, or are they against international law? It feels to me that UKLFI are being extremely selective in which bits of the law they like to promote, at the same time as turning a blind eye to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

For the blockade on Gaza began in 2007 and has been condemned by former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and other major human rights organizations.

And how would UKLFI defend Israel in court on this charge? Given the severity of the humanitarian crisis, Israel’s duties to “protected persons” as an occupier of the Gaza Strip under Article 55 of the Fourth Geneva Convention require that it allows the passage of all aid, foodstuffs, and water. “Protected persons” are civilian individuals who find themselves, in case of an armed conflict or occupation, in the hands of a power of which they are not nationals. In this case, “protected persons” are the people of Gaza. By placing strict controls and limitations on all provisions for Gaza, including basic food, water, and medical aid, the Israelis have violated this stipulation of the Geneva Convention.

And how would UKLFI mount a defence on this charge, too? Israel’s blockade also violates international law under Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention whereby: “No protected person may be punished for an offence he or she has not personally committed. Collective penalties and likewise all measures of intimidation or of terrorism . . . against protected persons and their property are prohibited.” This article prohibits the use of collective punishment of protected persons, the breach of which constitutes war crimes. By having breached this article, the Israelis are guilty of war crimes under the Geneva Convention.

Would UKLFI declare the Red Cross to be beyond the pale too? The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the guardian of international humanitarian law, the law applicable in situations of armed conflict, has also termed Israel’s blockade of Gaza “collective punishment” in violation of international humanitarian law. In 2010 the ICRC called the

blockade a violation of the Geneva Conventions and called for the blockade on Gaza to be lifted. It was not.

In 2018 the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs warned that Gaza was on the brink of a humanitarian catastrophe.

And will UKLFI take on this case too? For in March 2019, a United Nations inquiry found Israeli forces may have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity by targeting unarmed children, journalists and the disabled in Gaza. (This was in Gaza's great march of return demonstrations, where citizens threw themselves at the fence [Israel does not recognise it as a "border"] - only to be executed by exploding bullets.

Amnesty International's 2017/18 Report on International Human Rights is critical of the "collective punishment" of the people of Gaza by Israel's illegal air, land and sea blockade of the Gaza Strip" and states that Israel's blockade has triggered a humanitarian crisis.

Just a few days ago, the UN High Commissioner, Michelle Bachelet, highlighted the deteriorating human rights situation in occupied Palestinian territory in two reports being presented to the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

She noted that in the vast majority of cases monitored by her Office, the resort to firearms or other lethal force by the Israeli occupation forces was unjustified. "Such recurring cases, along with consistent failure to ensure accountability, suggests a permissive policy concerning use of lethal force against Palestinians, in violation of their right to life."

The High Commissioner also addressed violations of international humanitarian law during the Israeli aggression on Gaza, collective punishment, arbitrary detention, ill-treatment, restrictions to freedom of movement and civic space.

Will the UKLFI be challenging these findings too?

And why are the UKLFI not kicking up a stink at the UN right now? For just last Monday, UN special rapporteur Michael Lynk accused Israel of committing the crime of apartheid in the occupied Palestinian territories. Whilst investigating rights abuses in the occupied territories, he said the situation on the ground met the legal definition of apartheid set out by international law. The system, he added, ensures Israeli domination over Palestinians.

"In the Palestinian territory that Israel has occupied since 1967, there are now five million stateless Palestinians living without rights, in an acute state of subjugation, and with no path to self-determination or a viable independent state which the international community has repeatedly promised is their right," he wrote in an advance copy of his report.

"The differences in living conditions and citizenship rights and benefits are stark, deeply discriminatory and maintained through systematic and institutionalized oppression," the report said.

The Canadian law professor's report is the first time a UN-appointed investigator has accused Israel of apartheid. However, it adds to a growing number of rights groups who have raised concern about the apartheid system Israel is maintaining on the ground.

Israel says Lynk's analysis, like that of rights groups before him, are baseless and are a smear campaign against its existence. No doubt this is exactly what UKLFI would say as well.

The Scotsman goes on to say that "The UKLFI letter added: "The Jewish community in Edinburgh is alarmed by the petition, especially as it promotes the elimination of Israel as the world's only Jewish state."

This is quite clearly a preposterous claim. How does twinning with Gaza, in a humanitarian action aimed at reducing 15 years of isolation and suffering, amount to the "elimination of Israel"? One would hope that Scotsman readers and Edinburgh citizens see through this desperate scaremongering.

Indeed, where is the evidence from the Scotsman and the UKLFI that the 700-strong Jewish community in Edinburgh is actually alarmed by the petition? Could they not find one person to come forward and give a statement to ack up this claim?

If Councillors or the Head of Legal need to learn more on the petition and Gaza, they can watch the video recorded on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March, which shows Gazan Mohammed Alshorafa outlining the harshness of life in Gaza, at the Rally for Gaza [https://youtu.be/MIkY8ad\\_9qs](https://youtu.be/MIkY8ad_9qs)

In conclusion then, I can only say that both the Scotsman's reporter- and the UK Lawyers for Israel will soon be finding themselves on the wrong side of history. And both are mounting claims against me, Hamas and the petition that are, quite simply, ridiculous.

The petition is purely to give hope- a bridge for the ordinary people of Gaza- to reach out to the world, with Edinburgh supporting it along the way.

#### POSTSCRIPT

The Scotsman article is virtually a copy and paste one from this one in the Jewish News, published in London two days ago:

[Edinburgh Council to formally discuss proposal to twin city with Gaza | Jewish News](#)

There is every chance that the Scotsman and the Herald will publish more smears against me. They will have no shortage of material, as simply googling my name will offer them a treasure trove. If readers care to visit [www.bogusantisemitism.org/rogues-gallery/#pete-gregson](http://www.bogusantisemitism.org/rogues-gallery/#pete-gregson) they will see how I plan to respond to these smears, as and when they arrive.

To conclude, I shall write to Michael Mansfield QC today to seek affirmation that he would take up any cudgel should UKLFI seek to proceed to court action. For they will most definitely lose their trousers over such a folly.