

# Twin Edinburgh with Gaza– Council Petition

Join the call for Edinburgh to twin with Gaza City. The Council Policy Committee will meet on Tues 29th March at 10 am to discuss our petition, first lodged two years ago, but delayed due to COVID. We'd like supporters in Edinburgh to write to their local Councillors before the



meeting, asking them to support the bid. See how to do this in a few minutes on our website's "What you can do" page.

Our chances? SNP lead Edinburgh with Labour and both seem to be sympathetic to Palestine. The Greens support the bid; along with the mayor of Gaza City; Tommy Sheppard MP; Dr Philippa Whitford MP; Cllr Pdraig McShane; the Muslim Women's Association of Edinburgh; Husam Zomlot (UK Palestinian Ambassador) and Gaza Sky Geeks. And Gazans are signing their petition to our Council leader and Lord Provost to seek to twin– at <https://chng.it/Pgrwn7qM>

Cllr McShane was with Moyle Council in NI and led its twinning with Gaza in 2012; he



helped promote linkage in football, health care, women's issues, libraries, parks, sewage processing and education. Due to reorganisation, Moyle Council no longer exists. But if Moyle can do this with a population of 17,000, what could Edinburgh offer, with a population of half a million? Cost is no issue; twinning did not cost Moyle Council a single penny.

Arthur Balfour in 1917 was key to creating modern Israel and hailed from East Lothian, so Edinburgh is an appropriate choice for beginning to address historical wrongs to the Palestinians. Dundee is twinned with Nablus and Glasgow with Bethlehem; now Edinburgh can play its part.



# Edina– sister up to Gaza



**For Edinburgh, twinning with Gaza in a “Sister-City” arrangement would not be to support Hamas, for the siege is fundamentally illegal. Note the twinning would be with Gaza City’s people, not Hamas. See these videos in the post on our website home page:**

- ◆ Jewish political scientist Norman Finkelstein “It’s not about Hamas” in 4-mins.
- ◆ The petitioner says in 8 mins “Why we should twin”
- ◆ He’s been maligned as antisemitic; the stories behind the smears are laid out
- ◆ Amnesty’s 15 min film sums it up: “The Israel Palestine Apartheid Explainer”

***“For Edinburgh to twin with Gaza would be a blessed initiative” -Ilan Pappé, Israeli historian***

## **GAZA HAS BEEN UNDER SIEGE FOR 15 YEARS**

Twinning with Gaza City would give us opportunities for education and awareness and for our city to benefit from a wider international outlook. We could benefit from sharing knowledge and trade with Gaza in medicine, engineering, education and the arts. Twinning would encourage our Edinburgh institutions and businesses to reach out to their counterparts there, helping end decades of enforced isolation and collective punishment. We can together help end Gaza’s isolation and dependence on foreign aid.

We want to use the internet to help break the Gaza blockade and build up electronic trade. Most Gazans are young, speak excellent English and are highly educated and numerate. (The Arabs basically invented Algebra in the 9th century; the very word is derived from the Arabic Al-Jabr.) And they are good at computing. Mercy Corps (in Edinburgh) have set up **Gaza Sky Geeks** to help build coding skills and software developers. This is just one of the opportunities seized by Gazans, where they can earn money unrestricted by Israel.

Thanks to cloud computing, we can help Gazans deliver any internet service that can earn them money, like website building and other new e-challenges, with their coding solutions, database design and manipulation, data processing and analytic skills. They can run technical helplines (eg using chat) and service centres. Beyond that: net-based book-keeping and accountancy services, even graphic art and music production. **Zoom** and **Teams** allows people living in each city to work together and learn about one another. COVID has shown us new ways to communicate, wherever we are.

Presently Edinburgh’s finance houses outsource their IT work to India, spending millions there. If just a fraction was diverted to Gaza, what a difference that could make! With twinning, our Council can encourage our IT and finance houses to take a good look at trading with Gaza.