



Kevin McKee, Head of Legal Services
Cc Hayley Barnett, Corporate Governance Manager
Nick Langan, International Relations Officer
City of Edinburgh Council
City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh EH1 1 YJ
By email: kevin.mckee@edinburgh.gov.uk, Hayley.barnett@edinburgh.gov.uk;
nick.langan@edinburgh.gov.uk

25 March 2022

Dear Mr McKee

Petition to twin with Gaza City

UK Lawyers for Israel is an association of lawyers who seek to ensure that laws are correctly applied in matters relating to Israel.

We refer to the petition to twin Edinburgh with Gaza City, which is on the Agenda of the Policy and Sustainability Committee for 29 March 2022.

As we are sure you know, Gaza City is ruled by Hamas, which is proscribed in its entirety under the Terrorism Act 2000. This means that it is very difficult to see how Councillors or Officers could participate in any twinning activity without committing criminal offences.

For example, a person commits a criminal offence under section 12 of this Act if he invites support for a proscribed organisation; or arranges or manages a meeting to support or further the activities of or to be addressed by a member of a proscribed organisation; or addresses a meeting with the purpose of encouraging support for or furthering the activities of a terrorist organisation.

The activities of Hamas include governing Gaza City and controlling nearly everything in the city. “Joint economic development arrangements” and “joint civil undertakings” as proposed in the petition would almost certainly contravene this provision.

A criminal offence is also committed under section 17 of the same Act if a person enters into or becomes concerned in an arrangement as a result of which money or other property is made available to another person with reasonable cause to suspect that it

UK Lawyers for Israel, 30 City Road, London, EC1Y 2AB
Email: info@uklfi.com Website: www.uklfi.com

Patrons: Lord Carlile CBE QC, Lady Cosgrove CBE QC, Baroness Deech DBE QC, Lord Dyson PC, Sir Bernard Eder, Lord Grabiner QC, Stephen Hockman QC, Lord Howard CH PC QC, Sir Ivan Lawrence QC, Lord Pannick QC, Professor Richard Susskind OBE, Lord Trimble PC, Rosalind Wright CB QC, Lord Young CH PC DL

may be used for the purposes of terrorism. Under section 1(5) of the Act, action taken for the benefit of a proscribed organisation is deemed to be taken for the purposes of terrorism.

Hamas is also designated in its entirety under The Counter-Terrorism (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Under Regulation 12 of these Regulations, it is an offence to make funds available directly or indirectly to a designated person, including any person controlled directly or indirectly by a designated person.

Funding of any joint activity would be likely to contravene these prohibitions.

We respectfully suggest that you have a responsibility to advise Councillors on the applicability of these provisions and the serious consequences that would ensure from breaching them.

In addition, we would point out the need to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, including the requirement to have due regard for the need to foster good relations between persons of different religions and ethnicities. 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, and the petitioner, Pete Gregson, is a notorious antisemite: see eg

<https://www.thenational.scot/news/17334383.gmb-expel-labour-activist-pete-gregson-anti-semitism/>

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/17769276.labour-anti-semitism-row-scots-activist-claims-holocaust-exaggerated-formed-anti-zionist-group-suspended/>

<https://www.ipso.co.uk/rulings-and-resolution-statements/ruling/?id=05311-19>

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2020/feb/22/uk-left-activists-at-far-right-events-antisemites-holocaust-deniers>

<https://www.theredcard.org/news/2020/3/18/update-on-school-competition-2020>

Finally, we note that the petition wrongly claims that “At present Gaza City is twinned with Tel Aviv, Israel”. This is not correct: see <https://www.tel-aviv.gov.il/About/Pages/Partnerships.aspx> (in Hebrew, but can be translated using Google translate).

Please confirm receipt of this letter and that you will advise Councillors appropriately regarding the points set out above.

Yours sincerely



Jonathan Turner
Chief Executive