

Open Letter to Glasgow City Council

In the lead up to Christmas, we are reminded of the story of the nativity. A child born under occupation, and a family seeking refuge in the town of Bethlehem in Palestine. As Bethlehem is twinned with Glasgow, we believe this places particular responsibility on our city to take every step it can to signify its solidarity with Palestinians.

Due to the intense Israeli attacks on Gaza this year, Palestinian Christian leaders have cancelled their regular Christmas celebrations. Rev Munther Isaac of the Lutheran church says; "It's impossible to celebrate while our people in Gaza are going through a genocide; when children are being massacred in such a brutal manner."

The Lutheran church have replaced their traditional nativity scene with the powerful image of a baby swaddled in a Palestinian keffiyeh, lying in the rubble. The wise men and shepherds are looking on, while a light symbolises hope among the chaos and destruction.

We have arranged a similar scene and placed this outside Glasgow City Chambers. We are echoing this gesture as an expression of solidarity with those facing unimaginable suffering, and in recognition of the Friendship Agreement that has existed between Glasgow and Bethlehem since 1992.

The cities signed an official Twinning Agreement in 2007, and have since fostered important cultural and educational exchanges. During the 2014 war on Gaza, then Lord Provost, councillor Sadie Docherty, made the decision to fly the Palestinian flag above Glasgow City Chambers. This simple but purposeful act was an incredibly poignant moment for many and helped to express what words could not.

While welcoming the recent vote in favour of a ceasefire by the majority of Glasgow's councillors, we further call on our city to fly the Palestinian flag in unity with our twin city of Bethlehem, and the besieged and bereaved families of Gaza.

Signatories

Glasgow-Palestine Movement Assembly
Glasgow Stop The War Coalition
Parents for Palestine, Scotland
Gaza Genocide Emergency Committee (GGEC), Scotland
Feminist Exchange Network, Glasgow
Category Is Bookshop, Glasgow
Parents For Future, Scotland
Rumpus Room, Glasgow