

Media Brief: Israel's Exploitation of Palestinian Water Resources

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“Calls upon Israel, the occupying power, not to exploit, damage, cause loss or depletion of or endanger the natural resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem...” (UNGA 66/225. Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources)

Israeli exploitation of Palestinian natural resources, including water, is one of Israel's most severe violations of international law. The Israeli occupation aims specifically at annexing Palestinian land, including our natural resources.

The World Health Organization recommends a minimum domestic water consumption of 100 liters *per capita* per day. The average individual Palestinian domestic consumption, at 70 liters per day, falls 30 liters below this minimum, while the average Israeli consumes three times the recommended minimum (280 liters). In the southern West Bank, there are communities that use less than 15 to 20 liters per capita per day.

Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Bennett are well aware of this. Part of the political campaign made by extremist elements of the ruling coalition, who prefer to 'manage the occupation' rather than achieve a solution, is the argument that Israel obtains 50% of its drinking water from the occupied West Bank in order to justify its ongoing occupation¹. In fact, Israel exploits 90% of the water resources underlying the occupied West Bank for its own use.

Key Facts:

- From all water resources located in the occupied West Bank, Israel currently exploits 90 percent for their exclusive use. Only 10 percent is allocated for Palestinian use.
- The result of Israeli theft of Palestinian natural resources is that in the occupied West Bank the average consumption of water is just **70 liters per capita per day**, 30 liters below 'absolute minimum' of *100 liters per capita per day* recommended by the World Health Organization.
- In Israel, per capita water consumption per day is **280 liters per capita per day**, or three times the minimum established by the World Health Organization. This figure goes over countries such as France, Austria, Denmark, Brazil or the United Kingdom.
- On top of the inequality in water distribution between Israel and Palestine, the prices imposed by the Israeli occupation on Palestinian water are also higher than those in Israel. A Palestinian family spends on average 8 percent of its monthly expenditure on purchasing water while the worldwide average is only of 3.5 percent.
- In some cases, particularly in areas that Israel does not allow for Palestinian development, some Palestinian families must spend as much as 50 percent of their monthly expenditure on water alone.
- Israeli settlers in the Jordan Valley, subsidized by the State of Israel, pay an average of 0.9 percent of their monthly expenditure on water. **These same settlers are allocated 18 more water than the per capita amount allocated to Palestinians.**

- **In the Gaza Strip, 90-95% of groundwater is not suitable for drinking purposes** according to WHO standards.

Palestinian Position for a Final Status Agreement: International law guides, informs, governs, and controls Palestinian water rights and issues. All transboundary fresh water resources in the State of Palestine and Israel will be equitably shared between the two in line with international law. Therefore, the stability, prosperity and security of both Palestine and Israel will depend in large part on the quality of the structure and procedures that define Palestinian-Israeli relations on water issues. Most importantly, there can be no viable State of Palestine without access to its equitable share of fresh water and its exercise of full control over that supply in the interests of its residents.