

Desertpeace

THIRST AS A WEAPON..... IT'S EXPECTED FROM WAR CRIMINAL

October 27, 2009 at 7:34 am ([Israel](#), [Occupation](#), [Palestine](#), [War Crimes](#), [zionist harassment](#))

Israel rations Palestinians to trickle of water



Shepherds stand beside a cistern in the village of Umm al-Kheir, in the southern West Bank (OPT), September 2009.

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Children outside their homes – which are in danger of demolition – in Humsa (ex Hadidiya), Jordan Valley, July 2007.

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Amnesty International has accused Israel of denying Palestinians the right to access adequate water by maintaining total control over the shared water resources and pursuing discriminatory policies.

These unreasonably restrict the availability of water in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) and prevent the Palestinians developing an effective water infrastructure there.

“Israel allows the Palestinians access to only a fraction of the shared water resources, which lie mostly in the occupied West Bank, while the unlawful Israeli settlements there receive virtually unlimited supplies. In Gaza the Israeli blockade has made an already dire situation worse,” said Donatella Rovera, Amnesty International’s researcher on Israel and the OPT.

In a new extensive report, Amnesty International revealed the extent to which Israel’s discriminatory water policies and practices are denying Palestinians their right to access to water.

Israel uses more than 80 per cent of the water from the Mountain Aquifer, the main source of underground water in Israel and the OPT, while restricting Palestinian access to a mere 20 per cent.

The Mountain Aquifer is the only source for water for Palestinians in the West Bank, but only one of several for Israel, which also takes for itself all the water available from the Jordan River.

While Palestinian daily water consumption barely reaches 70 litres a day per person, Israeli daily consumption is more than 300 litres per day, four times as much.

In some rural communities Palestinians survive on barely 20 litres per day, the minimum amount recommended for domestic use in emergency situations.

Some 180,000-200,000 Palestinians living in rural communities have no access to running water and the Israeli army often prevents them from even collecting rainwater.

In contrast, Israeli settlers, who live in the West Bank in violation of international law, have intensive-irrigation farms, lush gardens and swimming pools.

Numbering about 450,000, the settlers use as much or more water than the Palestinian population of some 2.3 million.

In the Gaza Strip, 90 to 95 per cent of the water from its only water resource, the Coastal Aquifer, is contaminated and unfit for human consumption. Yet, Israel does not allow the transfer of water from the Mountain Aquifer in the West Bank to Gaza.

Stringent restrictions imposed in recent years by Israel on the entry into Gaza of material and equipment necessary for the development and repair of infrastructure have caused further deterioration of the water and sanitation situation in Gaza, which has reached crisis point.

To cope with water shortages and lack of network supplies many Palestinians have to purchase water, of often dubious quality, from mobile water tankers at a much higher price.

Others resort to water-saving measures which are detrimental to their and their families' health and which hinder socio-economic development.

"Over more than 40 years of occupation, restrictions imposed by Israel on the Palestinians' access to water have prevented the development of water infrastructure and facilities in the OPT, consequently denying hundreds of thousand of Palestinians the right to live a normal life, to have adequate food, housing, or health, and to economic development," said Donatella Rovera.

Israel has appropriated large areas of the water-rich Palestinian land it occupies and barred Palestinians from accessing them.

It has also imposed a complex system of permits which the Palestinians must obtain from the Israeli army and other authorities in order to carry out water-related projects in the OPT. Applications for such permits are often rejected or subject to long delays.

Restrictions imposed by Israel on the movement of people and goods in the OPT further compound the difficulties Palestinians face when trying to carry out water and sanitation projects, or even just to distribute small quantities of water.

Water tankers are forced to take long detours to avoid Israeli military checkpoints and roads which are out of bounds to Palestinians, resulting in steep increases in the price of water.

In rural areas, Palestinian villagers are continuously struggling to find enough water for their basic needs, as the Israeli army often destroys their rainwater harvesting cisterns and confiscates their water tankers.

In comparison, irrigation sprinklers water the fields in the midday sun in nearby Israeli settlements, where much water is wasted as it evaporates before even reaching the ground.

In some Palestinian villages, because their access to water has been so severely restricted, farmers are unable to cultivate the land, or even to grow small amounts of food for their personal consumption or for animal fodder, and have thus been forced to reduce the size of their herds.

"Water is a basic need and a right, but for many Palestinians obtaining even poor-quality subsistence-level quantities of water has become a luxury that they can barely afford," said Donatella Rovera.

"Israel must end its discriminatory policies, immediately lift all the restrictions it imposes on Palestinians' access to water, and take responsibility for addressing the problems it created by allowing Palestinians a fair share of the shared water resources."

[Source](#) **(Click to watch video)**

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