

Water



MAAN Development Center

Restrictions



Spotlight 2

- **0:** Number of liters of water allotted to Palestinians from the Jordan River since 1967
- **140:** Number of Palestinian water pumps destroyed by Israel since 1967
- **44:** Number of cisterns and rainwater collection structures demolished by Israel in Area C between January 2009 to August 2011
- **660:** Percent difference in water consumption between Israeli settlers and the Palestinian population in the Jordan Valley¹
- **40:** Percent of household income spent on water by Palestinian Bedouin
- **30:** Liters of water per day per person consumed in the Palestinian town of Tubas
- **401:** Liters of water per day per person consumed in the Israeli settlement of Beka'ot

From the beginning of the Israeli occupation in June 1967, Israeli governments have collaborated with the military to take over vast water resources in the occupied Palestinian territories. Nowhere is this more prevalent and detrimental than in the Jordan Valley. The discriminatory allocation of water in Palestine in general, and specifically in the Jordan Valley, is not only against international law but plays a major role in the strategy of the Israeli occupation.

International Law: The Israeli water policy in the Jordan Valley is inherently and openly discriminatory, clearly violating several international agreements and treaties to which Israel is a signatory:

- United Nations Resolution 181 of 1947, which led to the creation of Israel, stipulated that “Access for both States [Israel and Palestine] and for the City of Jerusalem on a non-discriminatory basis to water and power facilities”
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

obliges signatories to refrain “from engaging in any practice or activity that denies or limits equal access to adequate water; arbitrarily interfering with customary or traditional arrangements for water allocation.”

- The United Nations Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights affirmed in 2002 that “the human right to water is indispensable for leading a life in human dignity. It is a prerequisite for the realization of other human rights.”
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights stipulates that “All peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources.”
- The Fourth Geneva Convention requires Israel as an occupying power to “bring in the necessary foodstuffs, medical stores and other articles if the resources of the occupied territory are inadequate”
- The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Hague Regulations all explicitly forbid racial discrimination and the misuse or exploitation of the natural resources of others.

Water Access:

Approximately 313,000 Palestinians from 113 communities are not connected to a water network, and 42,000 Palestinians are “critically vulnerable,” accessing less than 30 liters per person per day,² which is dangerously close to the minimum level stipulated by the WHO to avoid mass health epidemics, such as in Haiti after the earthquake, and in Darfur and Congo during their violent civil wars.³

Restricted Access: Since 1967, Israel has repeatedly used the confiscation or destruction of water resources as a means of controlling the Palestinian population. From 2009 to August 2011, 44 cistern and rainwater collection structures in Area C were demolished,

affecting 13,602 Palestinians and displacing 127 people, including 104 children.⁴ Since 1967, the number of operational Palestinian wells has been reduced from 774 to only 328 in 2005,⁵ as Israel has destroyed 140 Palestinian water pumps and has confiscated another 162 agricultural water projects that had been developed under Jordanian rule.⁶ Moreover, Israel has completely prohibited Palestinian use of the Jordan River, which, before 1967, was a major water source for Palestinians in the Jordan Valley.

The Price of Water: The Price of water in the Jordan Valley has soared in recent years. As many Palestinians in the Jordan Valley are not connected to water networks, they are forced to purchase water in tanks from the Israeli water carrier. The price of water tanks has increased by 101-153% since 2000 due to increased closures.⁷ Water in tankers can cost between 14 and 37 NIS per cubic meter. Bedouin families spend around 40% of household income on water while those households who completely depend on water tanks spend over half of household income on water. Comparatively, settlers in the Jordan Valley spend around 0.9% of household income on water.

Endnotes

- 1 Save the Children, *Fact Sheet: The Jordan Valley*, 2009
- 2 Diakonia, *Israel's Administrative Destruction of Cisterns of Area C of the West Bank*, 2011
- 3 Human Rights Watch, *Separate and Unequal*, 2010 pg. 75
- 4 Diakonia, *Israel's Administrative Destruction of Cisterns of Area C of the West Bank*, 2011
- 5 MA'AN Development Center, *Restricted Access and its Consequences*, 2011 pg. 4.
- 6 MA'AN Development Center, *Draining Away: The Water and Sanitation Crisis in the Jordan Valley*, 2009 pg. 11
- 7 MA'AN Development Center, *Restricted Access and its Consequences*, 2011 pg. 7.