A CRY FOR HOME

WHEN YOU DON’T HAVE ENOUGH WATER

Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza cannot access safe and sufficient water. The problem is rooted, in large measure, in the Israeli occupation.

Access to water...

The World Health Organization recommends a minimum of 100 litres per day, per person.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Canadians</th>
<th>Palestinians in Gaza</th>
<th>Palestinians in West Bank</th>
<th>Israeli settlers in West Bank</th>
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<td>250 litres per day&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>91 litres per day&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>20–79 litres per day&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>400 litres per day&lt;sup&gt;4&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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The consequences of poor or inadequate water

Human health deteriorates

- People who drink contaminated water or reduce washing and bathing because of water shortages are at risk for illnesses like dysentery and diarrhea. This includes 75 per cent of people in Gaza.<sup>6</sup>
- Over two weeks in 2017, 25 per cent of Gazan households with children under five experienced water-borne infections.<sup>7</sup>
- Dehydration can cause fatigue, digestive problems, stomach ulcers and other infections.

Agriculture suffers

- Farmers cannot irrigate their crops or water their animals. In hot summer months, this can be disastrous.
- Lack of water and other basic services in Area C of the West Bank (under full Israeli control) forces many Palestinians to leave their communities, thus allowing Israeli confiscation of land and further expansion of Israeli settlements.<sup>5</sup>

Economic development reverses

- Without reliable access to water, many factories and industries cannot function.
- Lack of access to water is a significant factor in the “de-development” of the Palestinian economy since the early 1990s.<sup>8</sup>

A Cry for Home is MCC’s advocacy campaign on Palestine and Israel. Everyone needs a home – where families are safe and secure, where their basic needs are met, where they can come and go freely, and where they can imagine a future. But that is not the reality for Palestinians – or even for some Israelis. To view other fact sheets and learn more, visit: mcccanada.ca/cry-for-home.
The problem in Gaza: water quality

Gaza’s primary water source, the coastal aquifer, is polluted by over-pumping and wastewater contamination. **96 per cent of the water is unsafe to drink.** The UN projects the aquifer will be irreparable by 2020.9

Citing security concerns, Israel imposed a blockade on Gaza in 2007 which prohibits many materials from entering, including cement and iron. These materials are required to repair water infrastructure that has deteriorated or was damaged during Israeli bombings in 2008, 2012 and 2014.

Because of severe electricity shortages water is not pumped at the allotted times and with the pressure levels required to sustain families. Desalination plants cannot operate at full capacity.

Access to safe drinking water through the public network plummeted from 98.3 per cent in 2000 to 10.5 per cent in 2014.10

The problem in the West Bank: water access

80 per cent of groundwater in the West Bank is diverted by Israeli water company Mekorot, mostly for the use of Israeli settlements. Palestinians must buy back their confiscated water from Mekorot and face frequent shortages and high costs.

Palestinian infrastructure is inadequate. New water structures require Israeli permits, which are exceedingly difficult to obtain. Wells, cisterns or other infrastructure built without permits are frequently demolished.

Israel’s unlawful appropriation of natural resources, like water, in occupied Palestine amounts to “pillage,” and violates international law.12

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REFERENCES

1 Government of Canada, “Residential water use.”


