

# Water

## BRIEFING CARD

### Water consumption per day

- **100 litres: recommended by the World Health**
- **287 litres: for Israelis**
- **79 litres for Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank (when connected to the water grid)**

Israel seized control of all Palestinian water resources during its occupation of the West Bank in 1967. It also banned Palestinians from constructing new water installations or maintaining existing installations without a military permit. This is still enforced today.

### How does Israel restrict Palestinian access to water?

- Israel has confiscated Palestinian land near water sources.
- Israel has declared land near the River Jordan as ‘closed military zones’ to prevent Palestinian access.
- Israel has created near-impossible bureaucratic hurdles for Palestinians to drill water wells, install pumps or deepen existing wells.

More than 70% of Palestinian communities in Area C of the West Bank are **not connected to the water network**. Between 2018 and 2023 some Palestinian villages have been receiving water only once every 15 days.

Not only does Israel deprive Palestinians of access to water but Israeli state-owned water company Mekorot forces Palestinians to **buy back the water extracted from the West Bank at exorbitant prices**.

Israel also targets Palestinian water infrastructure, seriously affecting health and the environment.

- Israel has **seized control** of all water resources between the Mediterranean Sea and the River Jordan. It also diverts water from underground aquifers supplying Gaza.
- Israel uses water to further its oppression and discrimination against Palestinians.
- Under Israeli occupation, Palestinians suffer from a **water shortage**.
- Palestinians are also deprived of clean and safe water.

It is estimated that 25 million cubic metres of untreated sewage from the occupied West Bank is discharged into the environment annually. In addition, Israeli settlements discharge millions of cubic metres of **sewage onto Palestinian agricultural land each year**.



Palestinian Villagers, South Hebron Hills [BTSelem]

*“How can it be that Jewish settlers get unlimited amounts of pure water and that just across a fence children have to drink polluted water?”*

– Amjad Aleiwi, Palestinian hydrologist

In contrast with Palestinians, Israeli settlers living in illegal settlements on stolen Palestinian land enjoy **unrestricted water supply**.

During the covid pandemic, Palestinians suffered severe water shortages whilst Israeli settlers nearby had **unlimited water access**.

## Dangerous water in Gaza

Percentage of water in Gaza suitable for human consumption

- 2010: 6%
- 2023: 4%

96% of water in Gaza is unfit for human consumption. This is a result of Israel diverting water from aquifers supplying Gaza. The situation is made worse by Israel's destruction of water infrastructure through **repeated bombardments** and the Israeli siege which **restricts equipment for water supply infrastructure**.



This has a direct impact on the health of Palestinians in Gaza, particularly children:

- 50% of children in Gaza suffer water-related infections
- 12% of infant and child deaths are linked to intestinal infections



Public multi-faucet sink in Khan Yunis [B'Tselem]

*“Water-apartheid constitutes a systematic attack on the Palestinian people’s right to water and sanitation”*

– Al-Haq report, 2022

Israel uses water to oppress Palestinians, particularly children in Gaza.

### References:

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- 2) ‘Water apartheid’: How Israel weaponises water in the Gaza Strip’, Middle East Eye, March 2023, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/how-israel-weaponises-water-gaza-strip>
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