



UN says water crisis is making the Gaza Strip “unlivable”

- Today, 98% of the Gaza Strip’s two million residents (including some 991,500 children) are without clean drinking water due to Israel’s continuing destruction of Palestinian wells and the water infrastructure, and its refusal to repair damage from its military onslaughts.
- In a 2012 report the UN predicted that the Gaza Strip would be unlivable by 2020. The Gaza Strip’s sole aquifer will suffer “irreversible damage” unless urgent steps are taken to address the water crisis.
- Israel’s military aggression has targeted water, sewage, and electricity. Its 2014 bombardment of the Gaza Strip destroyed or damaged more than 50% of the water infrastructure, including 778 underground wells.
- For more than 12 years the Gaza Strip has been closed off from the world by an Israeli blockade.
- Following its destruction of large parts of the Gaza Strip In 2008–9 and again in 2014, Israel has permitted the entry of only 30% of materials needed for the reconstruction of water and wastewater projects. Pipes and cement have been barred as “dual-use items” considered to have military uses.
- In 2017 and 2019 two desalination plants were opened in the Gaza Strip. Together they can provide 16,000 cubic meters of water per day when the energy to run them is available. The residents of the Gaza Strip need at least 150,000 cubic meters per day.
- Water and sanitation projects that have been completed have been unable to function on a regular basis because of the severe fuel and electricity shortage.
- For months at a time the Gaza Strip has had only four to six hours of electricity a day. The electricity shortage has meant pumps don’t work, causing large sewage lakes to form. One lake overflowed, drowning 5 people in a nearby village.
- Because of the breakdown in the sanitation infrastructure, the equivalent of 43 Olympic-size swimming pools of untreated wastewater is dumped into the sea every day.
- The World Health Organization estimates that water contamination is responsible for 26% of all disease in the Gaza Strip.
- Half of the children suffer from water-related parasitic infections, and many babies suffer from “blue baby syndrome” due to the excessive nitrates in the water.