Israel uses Water as a Weapon against Palestinians

Israel controls Palestinians’ access to water in the occupied West Bank

- The World Health Organization’s minimum water consumption for “short-term survival” is 100 litres/ person/day (lpd). In the West Bank, water consumption is 73 lpd for Palestinians connected to a water grid, and 20 lpd for Palestinians not connected to a water grid.

- Nearly 200,000 Palestinians in the West Bank do not have access to running water.

- The more than 600,000 illegal Israeli settlers have access to 300 lpd. Settlers use six times more water than the entire Palestinian population of the West Bank (2.8 million people).

- Israel diverts large quantities of water from Palestinian wells and springs through pipes and tank trucks, and destroys pipelines that provide West Bank villages with water.

- Israel cuts off water supply to Palestinian towns and villages for weeks, forcing people to buy trucked water at five times the price of network water, which can cost 50% of a family’s monthly expenditure.

- During the summer, Israel diverts Palestinian water supplies to its illegal settlements. Palestinians wait weeks for water, often receiving it only in the middle of the night. Last summer, for example, residents of Nablus received running water once every ten to fourteen days.

- Israel blocks the development of new Palestinian water infrastructure, destroys and confiscates existing infrastructure, and limits Palestinian access to local water sources such as fresh water springs, drilled wells, and rainwater cisterns.

- Since Israel’s occupation began in 1967, not a single Palestinian village or individual has received permission to drill a well for irrigation—but Israeli settlements have drilled 27 new wells.

- No Israeli settlement, except those within the municipality of Jerusalem, has a sewerage system. Settlements release their wastewater into Palestinian water and land, exacerbating pollution and degrading Palestinian agricultural water supplies.

- More than 34 Israeli dumping sites in the occupied West Bank and Jerusalem have severely polluted groundwater, surface water supplies, valley watercourses, and springs.

See the Alliance for Water Justice in Palestine, waterjusticeinpalestine.org, for citations.