Israel uses Water as a Weapon against Palestinians

Health in the West Bank

- 650,000 Palestinians suffer lack of access to water and poor water quality due to Israel’s policies. 156,000 Palestinians are unconnected to a water network or receive water at most once a week.

- Illegal settlers consume as much as 700 litres/person/day of water. Palestinians have access to only 20–61 l/p/d (WHO recommends a minimum 100 l/p/d).

- Israel’s water restrictions and denial of building permits (including toilets and structures for privacy) make it impossible to maintain a sanitary environment, particularly for the personal hygiene needs of women and girls.

- Israeli factories and the Israeli army discard toxic waste on Palestinian land.

- 44% of Palestinian children in rural areas suffer from diarrhea because of sewage from settlements and poor water quality.

Health in the Gaza Strip

- 98% of the water is unfit for consumption. Lack of clean water accounts for more than 26% of all reported disease.

- 97% of the 2 million residents (991,400 are children) are without clean drinking water.

- The prevalence of chronic malnutrition is driven by the lack of safe drinking water, as are urinary tract infections, dehydration, and kidney failure. More than half the children under five suffer from chronic malnutrition.

- At least 25% of all childhood disease, and more than 12% of child deaths, are water-associated. 60% of kindergarten-age children suffer from at least one parasitic infection.

- High levels of contamination in the water, and in products and food produced with that water, have taken water-transmitted diseases to epidemic proportions.

- The massively overcrowded hospitals must reduce cleaning and sterilizing. Staff cannot regularly wash their hands when going from one patient to another.

- There are severe shortages drugs and medical equipment, and Israel often prevents seriously ill patients from leaving the Gaza Strip to get life-saving treatment in the West Bank and abroad.

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