Israel uses Water as a Weapon against Palestinians

Agriculture in the West Bank

- Israel’s control of more than 80% of the water, along with its illegal settlements, Separation Wall, and military zones, have deprived the Palestinian economy of nearly 65% of the most fertile and best grazing land.

- At most, 35% of irrigable Palestinian land is allowed to be irrigated, costing the Palestinian economy more than 100,000 jobs per year.

- Due to the low quantities of water available to Palestinian farmers, and the exorbitant cost of trucked water when even available, only 6% of cultivated land is irrigated.

- Israel forbids Palestinians from digging new wells, repairing old ones—or even setting up cisterns to collect rainwater.

- Israeli factories and illegal settlements poison Palestinian farmland (and water sources) with chemical runoff and raw sewage.

Agriculture in the Gaza Strip

- Israel’s blockade of materials allowed into the Gaza Strip and restrictions on produce exported from the Gaza Strip deeply undermine the agricultural potential.

- 35% of farmland falls within the Israeli-enforced “buffer zone” where farmers are regularly shot at by Israeli military.

- The Israeli air force sprays the land with herbicides. In January 2018, for example, 550 acres belonging to 212 farmers were affected, with an estimated loss of $1.3 million.

The Olive Harvest

- “Agricultural terrorism” by Israel’s soldiers and illegal settlers has destroyed 2.5 million fruit trees and 800,000 olive trees since 1967— reducing farmers’ income by over $12.3 million yearly.

- Were it not for the occupation, the Palestinian olive harvest and oil industry would provide income for 80,000 to 100,000 families, employing many unskilled laborers and more than 15% of working women.

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