

Liquidation

Podcast

Translated transcript in English

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Introduction

Speaker: Meira Asher

Liquidation is about the water crisis in the Occupied Jordan Valley. You will hear Arabic, English, and Hebrew. To preserve the vitality and organic nature of the soundscape I left the voices unaltered. There is a full text translation, in English and timestamped, available at RadioActiveOnWater.com.

Khirbet Makhul - 2:51 -

Speaker: the water truck driver

This water we bring to those farmers. The farmers consume water depending on how many members are in their household. There are people who might need every 2 days a [water] transfer, some, every 3 days a transfer, others every week a transfer, there are even ones who need a transfer every day!

Nowadays we're facing a problem with this gate [army roadblock] and the water due to certain events from the past, at the time we were instructed to deliver 5 transfers until it satisfies and supplies the residents of the area. However, today we're only capable of delivering 2 transfers. And these 2 transfers are not enough to supply the residents.

We've even reached to a point where we must split some of these transfers between 2 if not 3 families just for the sake of surviving... and we need you to help us fix this gate's times because there isn't enough time for the water or for us to deliver 5 transfers in order to satisfy everyone.

Today I came here at 5:30 so that I can deliver this transfer, and I can't come back to deliver another one... in the afternoon I'll come back for another transfer, in other words every day I deliver 2 transfers, so I spend a lot of time just for 2 transfers, and every day the truck is reserved just for those 2 transfers and that's a problem, you see? That's regarding the water situation in our area.

And even economically these delivers and transfers have become costly for us farmers which means every time I reserve this truck for said 2 transfers I get 300 shekels for each delivery and that's not enough for the car and it's

definitely not enough for my day off, so it's become super expensive for the farmer to afford anything, and beforehand we would've charged 200 which is considered logical at the time but 300 is a lot and that's an issue.

Speaker: Y. B., shepherd

And water can't be banned, not in Islam, not in Judaism and not in the Arab world,

water mustn't be forbidden for any living creature. If a Jewish man was to ask me if he could drink, I'd tell him drink, and that should go the same with him! For example, animals, people don't forbid them from consuming water! So, what they're doing is stressing as much as they can to stop water consumption so that they cast people out of their homes in their area.

5:54

Speakers: Natasha and Y. B.

Natasha: In your opinion, do you think that one day the [situation in the] valley will change and that maybe they'll bring all sorts of pipes...?

Y.: Israel? Never! Israel doesn't do that; they don't even want us here to begin with. I just told you Israel just shut the gate [army roadblock] and wants to bother shepherds slowly and slowly so that in the end no one will stay here.

In 2008 and 2010, Adi Shadad al-Atilla? oversaw the water source. He worked with Abu Saker. They sat and worked along Israelis, and they told them they'll lay a pipe for Hadidiyeh. They were stubborn and demanded 200 or 180 M3 per day for the farmers. They agreed then they dropped the case and started to say that "the PA doesn't want to provide you with water."

Speaker: Y. B.

The [Israeli settlers'] cows are eating the crops on our lands. I planted wheat, approximately 300 dunams (75 acres), they ate all. When there is wheat or something good he brings cows and puts them in. They [settlers]

don't want people here at all. This year there were good crops, good wheat and barley. We didn't harvest the barley. The settler brought sheep and cows, 500 heads, 300 heads and they ate everything.

Meira: When, when? Tell.

Y.: Maybe two weeks or one month ago. It's a mess. They do it every year, for the last 4-5 years. There are cameras and all, there are pictures. I take photos and describe so that the police will not tell me that I'm not right. I brought the police 4 or 5 times up to the wheat field. The police removed the [settlers'] cows from the field. He told me "Come to Binyamin" [police station] to file a complaint. I told him it's useless because I'll keep coming and going for nothing.

13:09

Speaker: Y. B.

We used to live after Hadidiyeh, 1990-1994 we came here, the military forces kicked us out from there, they destroyed all the houses and nobody knew about this, they took all our homes and we were left with nothing, so we came here. We've been living here since 2001. It's been probably 30 years, but my father lived in this area for 50 years if not 60 years, whereas we youngsters lived here for 25-30 years. In 2014 they kicked everyone out; from 30 families, there are only 4 families left here, and they're trying to kick them out as well.

In my case I can handle myself and bring myself water to drink from fellow neighbors, but goats? where will they get water access? These are animals. They need to drink 25-30 liters per goat, so when I don't have any water for them in this heat – it gets to 35, 40 degrees here – it's a problem.

Army "water" checkpoint near Ro'i Israeli settlement - **15:25**

Speaker: Nitsan, activist

We are standing now on the road going to the west, to a village called Atuf. In Atuf there is a source of water from which the shepherds are bringing water to their flocks. So we are standing at the blockade of this road, which is open twice a day for about 2, 2.5 hours each time. And the tanker of the water and also shepherds with tractors and tanks of water are going to bring water for the flocks and for the family. For the living basically.

They need this water for surviving and this blockade is many times, even in the hours that it is supposed to be open, is closed. So there are Israeli soldiers here and they stop a shepherd with a tractor and a tank – it's about 3m³ that he collects – is coming, and they might not let him pass through or they will ask for his papers. And even if they let him through, on the way back after filling the water they might stop him again. Sometimes shepherds are standing here for 4-5 hours... and then they try to go around which takes them hours and hours to find a roundabout way. We must understand that that's their only source of water. If they don't bring water, there's no water. No water for the sheep and no water for the people. It's a surviving matter. No access to water.

Speaker: W., shepherd

For water, we go to fill up a tank, if I were to go fill it up now, I'll probably return at 2 o'clock, or 3 o'clock, or maybe not return at all, because they close the checkpoint and keep you reserved there. Yesterday or the day before, I filled my water tank, I entered at 11:30, filled the tank then returned, before they closed it in 30 minutes. He called me over, I came, told me to go fetch him our I.D.'s, he tells me that my name isn't listed on the checkpoint, and I have no access to it. I have goats [herd], I have children, they need to drink, my goats need to drink water, can you live without water? Can you survive? You can't! it [the goats] could probably survive not eating, but water? They can't.

He made me go back, after numerous attempts and begging, I want to go home, I need to pass the checkpoint, I have work. And he told me it's forbidden. I reversed the tractor, because I want to go home, I have children, I have a herd to take care of, I have work to deal with, I want to go, even if it's by foot. He threw me off the road, as if I'm crossing a border in Jordan, that's not what work is and that's not life, anyways, he took me in, dragged me, and tied my hands, blindfolded me, for about 2 hours, from 5 o'clock maybe till 9 o'clock. And I'm stranded on the roads.

Sitting? Sometimes sitting and other times standing, because I have a problem with my leg, I have a metal plate in it, but it's made from plastic, I have a problem, I can't sit nor keep standing, and it was freezing outside too, they were sitting in their car, laughing at me, and mocking me, a humiliation session, a farce. At 9pm, after 9 where did they drop me? The military camp, in their car, and it's freezing to death. And what did he [the soldier] do? He turned on the car's AC, instead of turning on the heating or even nothing, he decided to turn on the AC. They entered me to their camp and kept me in the car, they didn't let me out, about 20 minutes they decided to drop me at a different military camp in Samra, they brought me there and made me stand for another 2 hours in the freezing cold, and they just kept laughing at me, they're sitting in the car with its doors shut as they laugh at me standing outside in the harsh cold weather, laughing and eating and getting warm in the car like there's nothing.

Now he told me to go [out], where? He told me get out! And don't speak! And every time I'd speak, he'd yell at me to shut up... that's not life. They picked me up in their car and where did they drop me? They took me to Tyasir checkpoint. Same shenanigans, maybe for 15 minutes or 20 minutes, and I'm in the car, someone came and asked if I wanted to eat and I said I don't want to eat, water? Not even water. Anyhow, they returned me back and the time was probably 12:30 midnight, and where did they drop me? At the Hamra checkpoint, I sat there for maybe 15 minutes, and the last thing I remember was that they had my phone and ID. You're not allowed to answer your phone. Everything was reserved, after 15-20 minutes he gave me back my phone and ID and told me to go, and I asked, "go where?", and he said go wherever you go, I said I wanted to go home and he answered "there's no going back home, go", he made me cross

above the barrier, not through it, and my tractor and the water tank remained there for 2 days.

Yesterday I came back there at 1:30-2pm, and it wasn't open [the checkpoint], I waited there until someone came and called me over to check my ID, then he looked at me and said, "didn't I return you yesterday?" and I answered him "I want to go home", he answered you can't, it's forbidden, he took my ID and said "you're going to sit here for another 10 hours", same soldiers! And they were sitting all jolly and laughing at me. So, I asked him if there's someone that understands Hebrew and if he could give me back my ID, I continued telling him that I no longer want to enter [the checkpoint] I want to go back and head home. He asked me from where [you want to head out]? I told him from anywhere, I want to go back and see my children and bring water to them, my goats don't have water for them to drink and survive.

2 days of no water, where else can I get water for them? Anyway, after a long arguing session with one of the workers who understood Hebrew, he explained to him everything and told him that all I want is to get my belongings back and go away, he gave me my ID and I returned from there to Tammun, to Tammun in the tractor, and Al-Fare'a, and Bayt Hassan and I went down to the Hamra checkpoint. No access, either from the gate or from the Hamra checkpoint or go back to Tyasir, otherwise nothing. That's no life.

Khirbet Samra - **24:05**

Speakers: A. A., shepherd, Natasha and Nitsan, activists

Before the events [October 7-8], we used to bring water from Al-Bqe'a, with a tractor, and nowadays there are difficulties with tractors [on the roads] because they're slow, and the checkpoint is closed. So we brought a bigger vehicle [R's truck], it costs a minimum of 250 shekels per tank. Brought from Eyn El-Beida or Jiftlik. There are times where no one wants to give us water.

Speaker: Haj A. A. and family

There was a pipe connecting from Hadidiyeh' Abu Saker, you see, there was line there, then the Jews came and cut it. This pipeline didn't come to us.

Natasha: No not here, from where Abu Saker connected this pipeline?

Haj A. A.: He did it from the spring right over there and spread it to other areas, but the Jews didn't allow this to happen, so they cut everything.

There isn't any land for farming or plantation, not enough water to irrigate it too.

You can't do anything without water. It's difficult. You can't make tea, wash, or do laundry. It's impossible to do anything without water.

28:33

There should be a new [Israeli] water pipeline opened soon. For the past year, on this property land, we've been fighting for it, 20-30 dunam (5-8 acres) of land, maybe 7 dunams were dug. We tried to ask them if it's possible for them to extend their pipeline over here, they said they'll have to check and they'll come back to us, and in the end, they did nothing.

They told us that if we want [this extension] then we'd have to sign some documents.

I said I can't sign anything; I don't have the papers that proof that this land belongs to me. In other words, if you sign the documents you'd have to give up on your land and sell it – just sign, take the money, and forget the land was ever yours. All that if you want water, just sign the documents, that's the prerequisite.

Sign on what? So that they destroy all the plots of land.

What? What?

Did you sign anything?

Of course not!

The offer is like so, for you to get unlimited access to water, you must sign the documents so that you grant them permission to ruin your plots of land and build this alleged pipeline. And you get the money. And we refused to accept the offer and sign any papers.

No, we didn't request for any water meter counters, they decided upon themselves to dig up our lands and try to install them, I saw them with my own two eyes, so we asked for water, and they refused.

31:10

They also said, I remember, once Nitsan asked them "how come you are entering without permission", they said "Oh, we're doing it all the time and no one ever complains. And what they meant is "we are doing it on Palestinian fields all the time and no one ever complains". Because if they want to do it in Israel of course they ask permission before and they make all the papers, take lawyers... but here they are used to this situation that they go into someone's field and the owner says to himself "I don't want to get into trouble because they are settlers, they are Jewish" and they just don't do anything, they don't even complain". He said "I was really surprised that anyone was complaining" usually they don't complain.

N. [Natasha]: When you see, for example, Uri, one of the settlers over there, he has water in his tap, right?

J.: Yes.

N.: And why does he have, and you don't?

J.: Maybe we can't bring enough water and do things as he does... things that are fulfilling.

N.: What do you mean?

J.: Meaning, when it comes to water, he can bring it whenever he likes, he makes a tap, and fixes things up accordingly to his liking,

N.: He installed a water pipeline and now he gets unlimited water access to his comfort.

J.: But unlike him, in our case my dad has to call someone, till he answers, till he obliges to our request, and till he brings the water, it's a hassle...

N.: And why can't you do [water] taps like him?

J.: I don't think we're allowed to...

32:33

Location: water cisterns, Samra

Speaker: Nitsan, activist

This is the old traditional way to collect water. Here they collect water in the winter so they will have some water later, in the spring and summer. Nowadays

they are not allowed to renovate these cisterns and these cisterns need to be renovated, once in two three years.

So I will explain how it works: you can see that there are little walls of stones that are coming from the top of the hill to here and from the top of the hill to there and when the rain comes the water is being collected or directed into this little hole.

Here in this little hole, all the hard stuff is sinking and from here there's a pipe that is leading to the cistern and whenever there is rain the water is flowing right here and flowing into the cistern and filling it. Then, later on they will come with a bucket and a rope, and they would simply bring out the water to give to the sheep. Of course it's not clean water, it not for drinking, but for the sheep its good enough.

So you can see that now the cistern is half full. Perhaps let's throw a stone inside... yea, and they have quite a lot around here. I would say here in Samra they have about 15 cisterns.

Because they cannot renovate them, perhaps only 3 or 4 are still working. And we come, we the activists come and help renovate them once a year so we clean all the mud that is being collected and rebuild the little walls of stones that you can see here.

That's an interesting cistern, this one because of the story. A few years ago they [the shepherds] brought workers to renovate it, there were about 2, 3 workers renovating it and the army came, arrested the workers and confiscated all their equipment and we tried to find out what's the problem and they said that because it's an archeological site, they are basically destroying an archeological site. I mean it's ridiculous but that's the "funny" excuses that they find...

37:23

Speakers: A., H., B., and kids, Natasha

A.: In my house, all the water is out, I don't have water here or there, and tomorrow I'll come and get some, I can't get today. They rang up Rafee'

and spoke to him on the telephone, he said he can't today it's difficult to head out now, so tomorrow we wait.

H.: There are a lot of heavily restricted areas filled with military forces, back in the day we used to be able to fill our tanks a whole lot more than today, now we wait for the tractor to retrieve and deliver the water supply and most of the time it doesn't arrive because it's stuck at the border and all sorts of complications that they face there. And there are cases where people put manure in the water sources, which causes more problems for us to get access to nearby sources. But thanks to Rafee', when we call him, he'll go and he doesn't miss out on any of us, he comes on time. But he needs lots of money...

N.: How do you survive when your water is out?

A.: Barely, sometimes I'd have no other choice but to use the goat's water. I'll spend an entire day with them, I have to cook, wash dishes, do laundry. It's hard.

H.: Water is everything, we need to wash our plates, shower, drink. We can't do anything without it.

H.: All our work and chores require water!

When times my water ran out, I'd have to go buy mineral water from the store. Other times, depending on our luck, I'd ask someone to get it from a well.

B.: No water, no life.

N.: The water, do you think the situation will change?

B.: So long as there's no water nothing will change. Like I said, no water, no life.

If I were to head out now and have some quality time with my kids out in the wild during the beautiful springtime, I wouldn't be able to, it's difficult, I can't even cross the street and hangout with my kids. We don't know. If I were to head out now, a settler would send me straight back to my house. It's forbidden.

Children that are in schools, like my son right here, and my daughter, every day they finish their classes they wait at the bus station, they get out from here and I let D carpool them. I fear for them, every day he drops them off

and I feel at ease. Everything for us is a struggle, we're limited from everything, no freedom whatsoever, it's suffocating.

N.: And in the future? What's the future going to do to us? Same thing?

B.: Same thing

N.: And you? When you grow old, what will you do?

A.: They're scared everything is uncertain, there's fear, I fear for my children. Always fear.

A.: They [the kids] like to sit here.

B.: If there weren't any restrictions we would've opened a tent and hung out here.

N.: Even if there's no water?

A.: Even so.

N.: What about the wells?

B.: They're filled with rubbish and sludge.

N.: So the water shortage doesn't scare you?

A.: Security, security is important. Main reason we have no water is due to the lack of security. If I were to send my son out to fetch us water he wouldn't return to us, because there's no security. With all due respect, when there is no security, there's no water.

Mekorot pumping station, al-Farsiyah - **42:43**

Speakers: Natasha, activists

We are here in the North part of the Jordan Valley, near a pumping station of Mekorot – it is the name of the national water company of Israel. Mekorot made here, in the Jordan Valley, a very huge and complicated water distribution system which is based on the local aquifer, there's a local aquifer here, which is of course Palestinian land. But Mekorot is pumping from this aquifer a large amount of water and distribute it to the Jewish settlements here.

This situation started way back in the 60s when settling here began and all the time Mekorot develops this supply system and adding more pumping stations, more reservoirs and as the wells took a very big amount of water,

much more than the aquifer could supply, the last maybe 5 years Mekorot began another project of deepening its wells almost every well, because salinity grew in the water so now they dig new wells beside each old well.

And wells here are hundreds of meters now beneath the ground, like many other things in the Occupation, this theft is being done on a “legal” basis. For example, in the Oslo agreements, they put this part that says that Israel will be in charge of the portable water distribution system and we’ll give the Palestinians about 5 million cube every year and the Palestinians are forbidden to make any part of the water system; they are forbidden to dig new wells, to repair wells, forbidden all that. And what happened is that since the Oslo agreements of course the population grew, I don’t know how many times but this number stayed as is! And of course when the Palestinians signed the Oslo agreement they were sure that this is only the first stage or something, but now they are stuck in these amounts that fit to the 90s and they don’t have any other sources.

And if they had some wells of their own, because of the extensive pumping that Israel makes from the aquifer, their wells dried. Just stopped giving water. So now it’s slow drying of the Palestinian population.

This is one pumping station of many because the Jordan Valley is a place with height differences of the land. We are here between maybe minus 200 below sea level to maybe about 100 above sea level. So these height differences, in order to give water to different heights there are pumping stations which take water from one level to another level.

I can tell you that Israel has an agreement with the Jordanian state and Israel sells Jordan about 50 million M³ per year. So it’s not that there is no water. There is a lot of water but Israel chooses to whom to give it. It goes very “good” with all other activities of Israel where they don’t give water to the Palestinians and the limit in a very consistent way the water that the Palestinians get. If you don’t give someone water, he is limited in all of his activities.

49:21 Marej Naji, Khirbet al-Hamma, Khirbet al-Deir

Speaker: Aref Daragmeh

We are here in Marej Naji country and the area of Marej Naji. As you see, Marej Naji is near the fence between Jordan and Palestine land. We are speaking about the dangerous thing for the farmers in this area; they are without water. As you see they bring water from a distance and the water is not enough to irrigate their herds and plants. But in this month. Let me speak, two months ago the Israeli Civil Administration came and demolished three times at Hussain Daragmeh. They destroyed his water reservoirs and trees. They do not give the people water from Mekorot and they do not want the people to plant their land and stay with their families in peace.

There is a lot of water in this area. Before 1967 it was full of water and places with water but now the Palestinian every day are speaking about the danger of not having water, they bring water from here and here to irrigate their lands. We are speaking about 45 farmers but if they have water from Mekorot and pay for it they will live very good life but they do not want them to live a very good life. I was the head of the council of all of the Bedouin areas. I asked many times to give us water by pipes and the council will bring them money for this water but they don't give us a cube of water to irrigate our children because they want us to leave this area.

The good thing that the pipe of Mekorot company crosses our lands, under our tents and our children put their faces on the pipe because its cold and they do not give me cube of water. Mekorot destroys a distance of land. They are putting big pipes near the tents of the people, crossing in our land. And I said to you in Makhul, in Samra in many areas, I see the pipes under the tent of the Palestinian! And the Palestinian goes to a distance far away to bring water which cost 230 shekel for 10 M³ to bring for the family. This is our main problem. The water is in our land, near our tents and they do not give us. We ask them "give us water and we will pay" but they want us to leave the area.

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