



Israel Palestinian Water Issues-2014

Tzippi Livni, Minister of Justice and head of Israeli team to talks with the Palestinians 2014:
"...Israel gives the Palestinians more water than what we committed to in the interim agreements."

A new study from leading Israeli hydrologist Prof. Haim Gvirtzman, based on previously classified data, refutes Palestinian claims that Israel is denying West Bank Palestinians water rights negotiated under the Oslo Accords. The study also proposes a practical plan for Israeli-Palestinian water sharing in the future.

The study from the BESA Center at Bar Ilan University examines Palestinian water claims against Israel by presenting detailed information about water supply systems presently serving Israelis and Palestinians. He also discusses international law and shows that the Palestinians have little basis for their water demands.

Gvirtzman relies on previously classified data, recently released for publication by the Israeli Water Authority – 15 years after the signing of the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement. The data shows that currently there is almost no difference in per capita consumption of natural water between Israelis and Palestinians.

Nevertheless, the Palestinian Authority claims that it suffers from water shortages in its towns and villages due to the Israeli occupation and cites international law in support of its claims. These claims amount to more than 700 million cubic meters of water per year (MCM/Y), including rights over the groundwater reservoir of the Mountain Aquifer, the Gaza Strip Coastal Aquifer and the Jordan River. These demands amount to more than 50 percent of the total natural water available between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River.

But contrary to Palestinian claims, Gvirtzman demonstrates that Israel has fulfilled all of its obligations according to the agreements it signed in 1995 with the Palestinian Authority, and in fact has exceeded them. The PA currently consumes 200 MCM of water every year (with Israel providing about 50 MCM of this) – which, under the accords, is more than Israel is supposed to provide a full-fledged Palestinian state under a final settlement arrangement.

The study can be accessed at
<http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/docs/GvirtzmanWP180112.pdf>

Water experts point out that the Palestinians have been delinquent in building sewage treatment plants. They have lost large amounts of water because of leaky pipes; these losses amount to about a third of the total availability. Palestinian farmers have engaged in water theft. Palestinians have drilled more than 250 unauthorized wells in the West Bank, and 3000 in Gaza, all causing harm to the underground water table. They have also engaged in unauthorized connections to the Israeli water supply pipelines, especially Mekorot, the Israeli National Water Carrier.

The Israeli Water Authority reports that Palestinians in the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) receive 50-53 MMC per year, which is 20 million cubes more than Israel promised in the framework of the Oslo agreement. The Palestinians argue that given the growth in population the quotas set in 1993 are not suitable to 2014.

Recent European charges that the Palestinians receive only 17 MMC per capita a year are inaccurate and false. According to the Israel Water Authority the Palestinian water allotment is 103 liters or 37.6 MCM per annum. (For purposes of comparison, the annual water allotment per capita in Germany in 2009 was 122 liters per person.)

In November 2013, Baruch Nagar, the head of the Water Authority in Judea and Samaria, noted that "all of the water thefts in the region have amounted to five million cubic meters out of a total of some 103 million. We charge the Palestinian Authority for all the thefts, and (the PA) is also obligated to cover the cost of the Civil Administration's efforts to thwart the thefts."

Nevertheless, nearly all Palestinians are connected to running water. Before 1967, only 4 of the 708 Palestinian towns and villages were connected to a running water network: in 2012 96% of the 708 were connected. All will benefit from the extraordinary increase in desalination that Israel began in 1973. The desalination plants at first supplied only the Dead Sea and Eilat areas. Now, through the five plants along the Mediterranean coast, Israel produces 505 million cubic meters of water a year. By 2020 the amount will be 750 million.

Read more:

<http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/docs/GvirtzmanWP180112.pdf>

http://www.americanthinker.com/2014/02/water_for_israelis_and_palestinians.html#ixzz2taPg0icH

<http://english.pnn.ps/index.php/national/6930-report-israel-s-exploitation-of-palestinian-water-resources>

<http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART2/552/390.html?hp=1&cat=402> (Hebrew)

This information is current as of 2014.