

Whilst the water flows freely into the illegal Israeli settlements, Palestinian towns and villages are running dry.

Israel has taken sole control of the Mountain Aquifer, the West Bank's principal water supply, and is taking around 80% of it to supply either the illegal settlements or Israel itself. The average Israeli settler now uses around 400 litres of water a day, twenty times more than many of their Palestinian neighbours are forced to survive on.

A Palestinian reservoir stands empty in the village of Jiftlik. Locals face increasing restrictions accessing water.



**... BUT NONE FOR PALESTINIAN RESERVOIRS.**

This deliberate discrimination is making life impossible for hundreds of thousands of people. As In'am Bisharat, a mother of seven, recently told our researchers,

**"We don't choose to live like this; we would also like to have beautiful homes and gardens and farms, but these privileges are only for the Israeli settlers...we are not even allowed basic services."**



# **DROP BY DROP, ISRAEL IS SQUEEZING THE LIFE OUT OF THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES**



There are more than 120 Israeli settlements and 100 outposts in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Every one of them has plenty of water. And every one of them is illegal under international law.

As the occupying power, Israel is forbidden by the Fourth Geneva Convention from transferring "its own civilian population into the territory it occupies". The Israeli settlements, therefore, constitute a war crime.

**THERE'S WATER FOR ISRAELI SWIMMING POOLS ...**



© Angela Godfrey-Goldstein

An Israeli swimming pool in the Ma'aleh Adumim settlement, unlawfully established in the occupied West Bank.

The entire international community is united in agreement that the settlements are illegal and an obstacle to peace. And yet far from closing them down, the Israeli government is intent on expanding them even further.

To make way for that expansion, Israel is deliberately driving Palestinian families and communities from the land they have lived on for generations.

**"WHY MUST THEY DESTROY THE LITTLE WE HAVE? WHAT HARM HAVE WE DONE BY CULTIVATING THIS SMALL BIT OF LAND, SO THAT WE CAN FEED OUR CHILDREN? ... WHY SO MUCH CRUELTY TO HUMAN BEINGS, TO THE LAND, TO NATURE?"**

**Samar Da'ish, a farmer's wife.**

**SHARE THE WATER  
PROTECT THE HUMAN**



# ISRAEL HAS MANY WAYS OF DENYING WATER TO THE PALESTINIANS.



## DENYING ACCESS

Precious water in the occupied West Bank is polluted and no longer usable after a rainwater harvesting cistern belonging to Palestinian villages was destroyed by the Israeli army under the pretext that it was built without a permit. Permits for water projects are rarely granted to Palestinians.

Fa'iq Ahmad Sbeih is a farmer. On 10 March 2008 he was visited by an Israeli army patrol. The soldiers pulled up and took away 1,500 metres of rubber hose which brought water to his farm from a spring on a hill above his land. They said it was being confiscated "due to lack of permit".

Amnesty International heard of this outrage and went to see Fa'iq Sbeih the next day. He was beside himself with worry. **"This is my family's livelihood,"** he said. **"We work day and night and we need water; and the weather is getting hotter every day. I can't buy another pipe; and if I do the army may come and take it again."**



A Palestinian woman washing clothes using water from a tanker because her house is not connected to the water network.

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## DEMOLISHING CISTERNS



Destroyed water cistern in Beit Ula.

© Amnesty International

For hundreds of years, farmers in this area have harvested precious rainwater in specially built cisterns. But now these cisterns are being systematically destroyed by Israeli forces, who would rather see the water flow back into the sand, than let the Palestinians have it.

Even small household supplies are targeted. Bassam Qdah, a teacher and father of seven young children, has been told that the cistern he built on his own land is to be destroyed because he doesn't have a permit. When he told Amnesty about it, his shocked disbelief was clear.

**"Why would they want to demolish this small cistern? It does not bother anyone and is on my land."**

There is at least one large well close to the village of Hadidiya, but the Israeli army will not let the villagers use it. Instead they must travel several kilometres to buy water and bring it back in their water tankers and tractors.

Except all too often they cannot even do that – because the army then confiscates their tankers.

**"We live in the harshest conditions, without water, electricity or any services,"** In'am Bisharat, who lives in Hadidiya, told us. **"The men spend most of the day going to get water and they can't always bring it... The (Israeli) army has cut us off from everywhere."**

Palestinian children play by a water tanker, which provides water for their homes which have no running water. In the background is the Israeli settlement of Ma'aleh Adumim, which benefits from all services including abundant water.



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## CONFISCATING WATER TANKERS

A Palestinian girl on her way to collect drinking water in Gaza, where 90% of tap water is polluted and unfit for human consumption.



© Yed El Bab/UNICEF-oPt



Mahmud Mat'ab Da'ish's vegetable crops and irrigation network, being uprooted by an Israeli army bulldozer while soldiers surround the field in Jiftlik, Jordan Valley, West Bank.

## DESTROYING THE INFRASTRUCTURE

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During more than 40 years of Israeli occupation, the water infrastructure in the Occupied Palestinian Territories has been driven into a chronic state of disrepair. Today, 90% of tap water in Gaza is unfit for human consumption because it is contaminated by sea water and sewage. As a result life-threatening water-borne diseases are common and some babies have turned blue with a blood condition called methemoglobinaemia, brought on by abnormally high levels of nitrates in the water.

**Amnesty is committed to ending the illegal and discriminatory policy that is threatening so many lives in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. In the build up to World Water Day, 22 March, your support will be vital. Please help us get the water flowing. Because without water, there is no life.**

[www.amnesty.org.uk/water](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/water)

