



The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), and the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) Issue a joint Press Release on the World Water Day

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) and the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) issue a joint press release on the World Water Day, on March 22 of each year. In light of the water reality in the southern governorates, the press release focused on the repercussions of the Israeli occupation aggression on the water and sanitation sector, and its repercussions on the Palestinian people in Gaza Strip. It is worth noting that the facts and figures stated in the press release are based on the initial estimates of the early recovery plan for the six-month period following the ceasefire. This plan was prepared by the Water Authority at the end of January 2025 and started its implementation, which is a part of the government emergency plan for the southern governorates - the first phase. It is supervised by the Government Operations Room formed by the Palestinian Council of Ministers. The press release also addressed the most important facts about the water and sanitation sector in general based on data issued by the Palestinian Water Authority in 2023.

More than 85% of water and sanitation facilities and assets have been completely or partially out of service

As a result of the Israeli occupation aggression that has lasted for a year and three months, initial damage assessments up to the ceasefire date showed that more than 85% of water and sanitation facilities and assets have been completely or partially out of service and require rehabilitation exceeding one and a half billion dollars, only for the areas where the damage has been identified, including sewage treatment plants, desalination plants, pumping stations, wells, water tanks, main transmission lines, water and sanitation networks, rainwater drainage, water control laboratories, and more. This has undermined all the efforts made by the Palestinian government with investments exceeding one billion dollars over many years to avoid the catastrophe that was threatening Gaza Strip due to the salinity and pollution of 97% of the groundwater, the only water source there.

The per capita share of water in Gaza Strip does not exceed half of the estimated minimum humanitarian requirement in emergency situations, which is 15 liters per person per day.

Due to the extensive damage incurred by the water and sanitation sector, water supply rates have declined to an average of 3-5 liters per person per day, varying significantly according to geographic location, water supply, damage to infrastructure, and ongoing displacement.

This percentage is less than the minimum requirement for survival in emergency situations according to the World Health Organization indicators, estimated at 15 liters per person per day. This is mainly due to the damage made to infrastructure, the complete power outage required to pump water from wells and operate related water facilities such as reservoirs and pumping stations, and restrictions on the provision of fuel and materials necessary to operate them.

Available water resources in Gaza Strip are suffering huge losses and water quantities have decreased to an average of 35% of what they were before the Israeli occupation aggression.

Gaza Strip relies on three main sources of water, and estimates indicate that, and as a result of the current aggression, the supply through these sources has decreased to approximately 10-20% of what it was before the Israeli occupation aggression. Yet, and with the start of urgent interventions, the rate has increased relatively to reach approximately 35% of what it was before the Israeli occupation aggression, and these sources include:

1. Groundwater: Through 300 wells distributed throughout Gaza Strip (290 wells belonging to municipalities, 10 wells belonging to UNRWA), with a total supply for all purposes of 262,000 m³/day, for all uses. Most of them sustained severe damage. As a result of the interventions carried out by the Water Authority in cooperation with service providers during the aggression period, the amount of water produced from them reached approximately 93,000 m³/day.
2. The three limited-quantity desalination plants (central, northern and southern): the northern desalination plant has stopped working completely during the Israeli aggression as a result of the extensive damage it sustained. In



addition, the Israeli occupation deliberately turned it into a military barracks, while the central station operated at a production capacity not exceeding 30% of its capacity before the aggression as a result of the damage it sustained in addition to the scarcity of fuel needed to operate the generators and the lack of spare parts needed for maintenance. As for the southern station, until mid-November 2024, it was operating at a total production capacity estimated at only 20% of its total capacity according to the availability of fuel. Later, it started operating at a production capacity of about 70% of its production capacity, after connecting the power line feeding the station.

3. Water purchased from Mekorot: (through three supply connections in the north, center and south). The amount of water supplied through these connection points before the aggression reached 52,000 m³/day, equivalent to 52% of the potable water. The occupation completely shut down the three connections at the beginning of the aggression. After they were reopened, the staff of the Water Authority and its partners began the necessary maintenance work on the main and sub-lines of these connections, and followed up and inspected the pumping work and expanded it to new populated areas. Until the date of the ceasefire, as a result of these interventions, a total of 40,000 m³/day was supplied, knowing that this amount later decreased due to a malfunction in the feeding line from the Bin Saeed connection that supplies the central governorate, and the delay in obtaining coordination to carry out the necessary maintenance. As for the water networks, about 2,263 kilometers were destroyed, of which 1,622 kilometers were completely destroyed, and 9 kilometers were partially destroyed. Unfortunately, with the lack of water to meet basic needs, talks of meeting agricultural needs have been postponed despite its strong ties to food insecurity in Gaza Strip.

Damage to the sewage system poses significant risks to life, health and the environment

Prior to the recent Israeli aggression, sewage services of Gaza Strip were well-developed, with an integrated sewage system that included collection, pumping, transport, and treatment facilities. The existing sewage system covers approximately 73% of the population of Gaza Strip, with infrastructure

consisting of a network of various diameters totaling approximately 2,250 km in length, 79 pumping stations, and 29 rainwater collection basins connected to eight rainwater pumping stations. Additionally, there are five wastewater treatment plants with a design capacity of 154,600 m³ per day. As of the ceasefire, all sewage treatment plants have been halted due to significant damage, which still requires detailed assessment, but access remains impossible due to the security situation. The networks have been severely damaged, with 1,545 kilometers completely destroyed and 8.6 kilometers partially damaged. Furthermore, 47 sewage pumping stations were destroyed, including 20 stations completely and 27 partially. This destruction has led to the flow of wastewater into streets and populated areas, posing a significant threat to public health and the environment.

Available groundwater quantities for Palestinians remain stagnant despite population growth and increased development demands

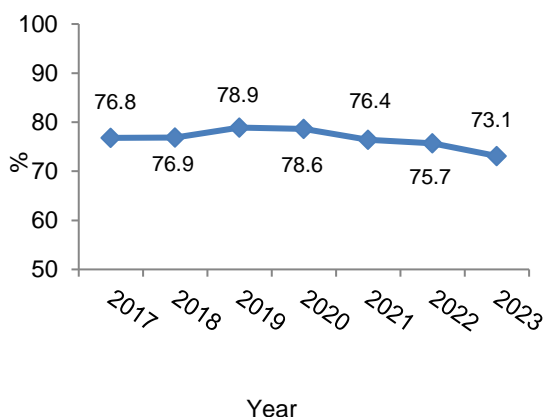
Palestine primarily relies on groundwater sources, which account for 73.1% of the total available water, amounting to 399.7 million cubic meters (m³). Of this, 289.63 million m³ is extracted, with 135.1 million m³ from the West Bank and 154.53 million m³ from Gaza Strip, of which 97% is considered unsuitable for human use.

In the West Bank, the amount of water pumped from the groundwater basins (the Eastern Basin, the Western Basin, and the Northeastern Basin) in 2023 was approximately 106 million m³. The stagnation in the pumping quantities (with small annual increases or decreases) is due to the obstacles imposed by the Israeli occupation, which hamper the drilling and rehabilitation of wells. This is the same reason attributed to the decline in the amounts of water pumped from springs, in addition to the increasing control and illegal actions by settlers in seizing these springs.

The main reason for the weakness in utilizing surface water is the Israeli occupation control over the Jordan River water, and the inability to utilize more than 165 million m³ of rainwater annually, due to preventing Palestinians from building dams and reservoirs to collect rainwater. The total amount of surface water utilized does not exceed 4 million m³, derived from Al-Auja, Al-Far'a, Beit Roush, Bani Na'im, Marj Sanur dams, and the Araaba reservoir, as well as some small-sized ponds.



Percentage of Abstracted Surface and Groundwater from Available Water, 2017-2023



Destruction of infrastructure during the ongoing raids in the West Bank exacerbate the water crisis, and displaced persons are in urgent need of water sources

Due to the continuous and repeated raids in the West Bank, particularly in the refugee camps of Jenin and Tulkarm governorates, there are no statistical figures available regarding the extent of the damage made to the water and sewage sectors to date. This is especially true given the repeated, systematic destruction of infrastructure and the subsequent repair efforts by local authorities. According to reports from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), the assault on Jenin, Tulkarm, Nur Shams, and Fara'a refugee camps has led to the widespread forced displacement of around 40,000 people. The majority of them, according to reports issued by local community institutions and the host authorities, are in urgent need of adequate water sources.

Water supply in the West Bank and Gaza Strip: a growing dependency on Israeli water companies

In the West Bank, approximately 60% of the water supplied for domestic use is purchased from Israeli water companies, with this water representing around 25% of the total available water supply. The Israeli occupation measures have severely limited the ability of the Palestinians to utilize their natural resources, particularly water, forcing them to compensate for the shortage by purchasing water from Israeli companies. In 2023, the total amount of water purchased for domestic use in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip reached 102.1 million cubic meters (m³), which represents 25% of the total available water.

In the West Bank, the amount of water purchased from Israel reached 85.9 million m³, accounting for 39% of the available water, and approximately 60% of the water provided for domestic use. It is important to note that the increasing reliance on purchasing water from Israel presents significant challenges for the Palestinian government, as Israel controls both the prices and quantities of water, especially during the summer months. This strategy is seen as part of Israel's broader approach to undermine the two-state solution by denying Palestinians sovereignty over their natural resources.

Data in 2023 indicate a slight increase in the per capita daily water share, reaching 88 liters per person per day in the West Bank, still below the globally recommended average of 120 liters. The total consumption reached 95.5 million m³, which includes water supplied for non-agricultural purposes, such as commercial and industrial use. Thus, the actual water supply and consumption for personal use are even lower than the reported numbers. When comparing the per capita consumption in Palestine to that of Israelis, it is evident that the average Israeli consumes three times more water than a Palestinian, and this gap doubles when comparing it to water usage by settlers or non-agricultural uses.

Domestic use as the largest consumer & water loss exceeds 30%

According to water data in 2023, the domestic sector accounted for 61% of the total available water. Data also revealed that water loss in the West Bank remains high, exceeding 35% due to the deterioration of water networks and illegal tampering with water lines by citizens. Statistics show variations in water loss rates between different governorates, with Hebron having the highest rate and Salfit the lowest.

Disparities in water prices and available quantities between governorates depend on the availability of resources and the ability of these resources to meet the needs of their population

The disparities in water quantities and prices between governorates stem from differences in the availability of natural water resources and the ability of these resources to meet the needs of the population based on population density in each governorate. While some governorates like Jericho, the Jordan Valley, and Tulkarm have an abundance



of local water resources, governorates such as Hebron, Bethlehem, and Ramallah rely heavily on water purchased from Israel to meet their water supply needs. It is noteworthy that the cost of producing water from local resources varies according to production costs, with the cost of locally sourced water being lower than the cost of water purchased from Israeli companies. This also leads to price disparities between governorates. The average cost of purchasing and producing a cubic meter of water is 3.2 shekels/m³, which is sold to local authorities at an average of 2.4 shekels/m³, reflecting a government subsidy of 0.8 shekels/m³. Achieving fairness in the distribution of water among local communities in different governorates remains a major challenge for the State of Palestine, due to the Israeli occupation policies and its control over the Palestinian lands. These conditions limit the potential for developing an integrated water system that ensures fairness in the management and distribution of water resources. Additionally, the Palestinian government faces the challenge of rising debt owed by local authorities, which reached over 1.8 billion dollars by the end of 2024.

Note: Data mentioned in this press release exclude those parts of Jerusalem, which were annexed by the Israeli occupation in 1967.

For more information, please contact:

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
P.O. Box 1647, Ramallah
P6028179 – Palestine.



Tel.: (972/970) 2 2982700
Fax: (972/970) 2 2982710
Toll Free.: 1800300300
Email: diwan@pcbs.gov.ps
Website: <http://www.pcbs.gov.p>

Palestinian Water Authority
P.O. Box 2174, Ramallah,
Palestine.

Tel.: +972 2 2987665
Fax: +972 2 2987336
Email: pwa@pwa.ps
Website: <http://www.pwa.ps>