

Israel`s Water Policy and Regional Environmental Pollution: Deny, Degrade and Delay

Rashed Al-Sa`ed

Institute of Environmental and Water Studies, Birzeit University

P.O. Box 14, Birzeit, Palestine; E-mail: Rsaed@birzeit.edu

Abstract

Given the role of water in the Arab-Israeli conflict in general and in the water treaty signed with the Palestinian side in particular, the impacts of the Israeli water policy on the sustainability of regional environmental resources have become of prime concern. This paper presents and analyzes the potential guidelines behind Israel`s water policy in Palestine for more than half a century. Using accessible data, published literature and analyzing the current water and wastewater infrastructures in Palestine revealed that the Israel`s water policy is harmful, poses adverse ecological hazards, failed to prevent pollution, lead to groundwater over pumping, and hampered sustainable management of water and sanitation facilities. Thus, the Palestinians have been beset by deny of water rights (Article 40 of Oslo Accords), degraded quality of water resources (inorganic and organic pollution), deductions (infrastructure charges) and delayed approval of wastewater facilities (one every 10 years). The Israeli water policy consisted of unilateral control, under pricing, discriminatory, and misallocations among different water users has adverse impacts on urban and rural development, poverty and quality of life of Palestinian residents. The findings of this paper will facilitate a wise and responsible Palestinian decision making process that guarantees a sustainable service delivery relating to water supply and wastewater treatment facilities.

INTRODUCTION

At least 1.1 billion people lack access to safe water and 2.6 billion lack access to basic sanitation, resulting in the deaths of 3900 children per day. Health Dignity and Development highlights the global water and sanitation crisis and advances a comprehensive set of strategies to tackle the problem, including national elaboration, government and stakeholder commitments; focusing on