

Israel Continues to Steal Arab Waters

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1. Historical Background

Since the leaders of the Zionist movement started their attempt to form the Zionist state which they aspired to, and from the beginning of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, there was increased interest in using the water resources of Palestine and the neighboring Arab countries. Perhaps the most suitable manner to succinctly summarize Israeli design regarding Arab water is to list in the following a brief synopsis of Zionist and Israeli plans:

1. The Warren delegation arrived in Palestine in 1873 headed by General Charles Warren sent from the British Royal Society to study the water resources in Palestine. The delegation published its report in 1875 with the conclusion that Palestine may host several million of residents; even in the middle of the Naqab desert; provided it is possible to provide water to it. The Zionists succeeded in 1878 to form the first settlement in Galilee which was later known as the Roshbina Settlement. Subsequent settlements followed on the western side of the Hawla Lake in 1873 such as the Settlement of Mishmar High Barock near the Lebanese border and within the Jordan basin.
2. Subsequent to holding the Zionist conference under the leadership of Hertzal in 1897 the Zionists succeeded in creating a new wave of immigration in 1907-1908. At the time Hertzal stated that *the true founders of the new-old land are the water engineers, because everything depends on them from drying the swamps to irrigating the new lands and creating hydro-electrical generating plants.*
3. In the Basel conference in 1897, Hertzal also stated *if I wanted to summarize the results of the conference I would say we have laid down the basis of the Zionist state with its northern border extending to the Litani River and fifty years from now most certainly all people will be able to witness this state.* It should be mentioned here that the Litani River is within the borders of the Lebanon and forms one of the main rivers of Lebanon.
4. Hertzal offered in 1903 the sum of one million Turkish pounds for the Turkish Sultan (Abdel Hamid the second) in return for his approval to allow the Zionists to settle in the Galilee area and around the neighboring region of southern Lebanon, where the Litani river forms a part of the Israeli plans to propagate settlements in the area.
5. The desires of the Zionist movement regarding the Nile River was expressed by Hertzal in 1903 when he suggested to the British government as a first step towards Palestine to settle the Zionists in Sinai, and this proposal was accompanied by the concept of benefiting from the water of the Nile and transforming some of its water to Sinai. The required amount was estimated at 4 million cubic meters per day. Lord Cromer and his government gave their preliminary agreement to this suggestion.
6. In a letter from Haim Weismann (in the name of the international Zionist movement) to Lloyd George (the British Prime Minister at the time) and dated 29/12/1919, Weismann stated *the Zionist organization will not accept under any condition the Sikes-Picot plan even as a basis for negotiation because this line of separation does not only divide historic Palestine but it does much more than that by preventing us from the best settlement areas in the Golan heights and Houran, on which the success of the whole project depends.*

7. Perhaps the most important part of the note submitted by the Zionist government to the Versailles peace conference in Paris in February 1919 in the wake of the first world war is that it demanded *the borders of Palestine should start from the north at the Mediterranean to include the city of Saida and follow the water routes to include the village of Karoun then moving towards the dividing line between the basin of Wadi El Qorn and the Western and Eastern slopes of the Sheikh mountain.* Which implies that the Zionists demanded to seize control over the Litani river, the Yarmouk river all the sources of the Jordan river and the Western Slopes of Jordan.
8. Haim Weismann sent a note to the British Foreign Secretary dated 30/10/1920 which included the following *I am sure that your honor recognizes the importance of the Litani river to Israel, because if all the waters of the Jordan river and the Yarmouk river were made available to Israel it will still not be enough; the Litani river is the source that can secure the irrigation of upper Galilee.*
9. Hoares Berklime stated that *the future of Palestine in its entirety is in the hands of the state that claims control of the Litani River and the Yarmouk River and the sources of the Jordan River.*
10. The designs of the Zionist movement on the Yarmouk River and the Jordan River came to the surface through the Rustenburg program, which gave the Zionists many privileges that allowed them to control the economy of the country and its natural resources, the first and most dangerous of which was the right to exploit the waters of the Jordan River to generate electrical energy. This exploitation right was awarded in 1921 to the Russian Zionist Benhas Rottengurgh and was agreed upon in 1926 for a duration of 70 years. Its conditions included *No individual or company are allowed to exploit the waters of the Jordan River and the Yarmouk River for any purpose except with the collaboration of the said company and this article also applies on the Jordanian people!!*
11. The second exploitation right awarded to the Zionists by the British was the right to exploit the water of the Dead Sea, which is an internal lake lying in the Jordan Valley with a length of 72 km, a width of 16km and a depth of 1300ft. The Dead Sea is considered rich in resources particularly gold and salt. The Zionists were able to exploit and extract the salt to sell directly to Europe.
12. The Zionist movement succeeded in 1934 in buying the exploitation rights of the Houla Lake. This program started implementation in 1951 using 130 km² of land and exploitation of 100 million m³ annually of water from the Jordan river to irrigate this land, build a hydro-electric station at the bridge of Bnat Yaqoub and build a diversion channel from this station to the North of the lake.
13. The investigating committee (Bill Committee) was authorized to investigate the reasons behind the Palestinian revolution in 1936-1939 and provide solutions in the form of suggestions and recommendations. The Ed Neds program came in the wake of this committee report and built upon its recommendations which became mainstream, including: *channeling the waters of the Yarmouk River through a channel passing through the Jordanian lands with the purpose of irrigating 45.3 km² of land on the western side and storing the excess waters in the Lake of Tabaraya. This program provided 742 million m³ annually. It also channeled the waters of Ras El Ain to the cities of Jerusalem, Yaffa and Tel Al Rabii (Tel Aviv) in 1935.*
14. The Maariv newspaper published a secret document on 18/3/1972 showing a letter sent by Ben Gorion on 7/1/1941 to the French president Charles De Gaulle which included *my wish in the future is to make the waters of the Litani River the borders of Northern Israel; the arid lands of the Naqab desert requires the waters of this river as well as the Jordan River and therefore the water resources of these rivers should be within the borders of the State of Israel.*

15. A Zionist company made an offer in 1941 to the Lebanese president Alfred Naqash to exploit the waters of the Litani River to provide Lebanese territories with water and electricity and channel the excess to Israel, but the Lebanese president refused the offer.
16. The Hays program came to the surface in 1944 and it constituted a qualitative shift in expanding the scope of the water resources being targeted for stealing by the Zionists for use by Israel, where it focused on the waters of the Basin of the Jordan River and it divided this process into eight stages.
17. The divergence of the British and French interests (the countries which carved up the lands of Greater Syria after the first world war) put a stop to some of the Zionist plots because some of the sources of the rivers under consideration were in the French controlled areas, the most important of which is the source of the Jordan river, the Litani River in Lebanon and the Golan Heights in Syria.
18. In 1948 the Zionist entity was born followed by the truce agreement in 1949 between Israel and Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and Egypt. Israel's main concern was to secure control over the waters of the Jordan River. Hence the program for the drying of the Houla Lake in 1951. Israel then merged several water projects and developed what was known as the National Water Project in 1956 which aimed at channeling the waters of the Upper Jordan River to the coastal areas and from there to the Naqab desert. Israel announced in mid May 1964 that the waters of the Jordan river are now flowing in the Naqab desert thereby violating the UN resolution issued in 1953 which prevented the channeling of these waters to the Naqab desert.
19. Subsequent to the UN resolution issued on 16/10/1953 the American president sent a special envoy (Johnston) to the concerned countries namely Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Israel with the aim of convincing them on agreeing on a unified project for exploiting the water resources in the Basin of the Jordan River. The program aimed at dividing the waters which amounted to 1213 million m³ annually; whereas Arab estimates put the water resources at 1422 million m³ annually. According to Arab sources the water resources is divided as follows (in million m³ annually): Lebanon 35, Syria 132, Jordan 975 and Israel 287. However according to Israeli sources Lebanon was eliminated from the project and the project was rejected by both parties.
20. In 1954 the Couton Program was developed, a program which was effectively developed by Israel, and planned to include the Litani River which originates and flows in Lebanon, with a flow of 700 million m³ annually and to distribute its waters as follows: Lebanon 300 m³ annually, Syria 45m³ annually, Jordan 710 m³ annually and Israel 1290 m³ annually. Furthermore, the Couton program showed for the first time the transfer of the Jordan River to the Naqab desert.
21. The Arabs finally awakened to Israeli designs and developed in 1945 a program to maintain the Arab water rights in Syria and Jordan. The program focused on the Yarmouk River, the Jordan River and its subsidiaries north to the Tabariya Lake. The program provided 330 m³ annually to Jordan, 90 m³ annually to Syria. The program rejected the notion of storing the waters of the Yarmouk River in the Tabariya Lake due to its proximity to Israel borders and in order to avoid the increased saltiness in the lower Jordan River – **And now, 69 years later this program is yet to be implemented!**
22. The Smith plan which extends for 7 years from 1953 to 1960 defined a program to increase water production to 1730 million m³ in 1960 instead of 810 million m³ in 1953. The water quantities were defined as follows: 380 million m³ from springs and ground and surface aquifers in Palestine and 540 million m³ from the Jordan River and its subsidiaries.
23. David Ben Gorion stated in a speech in 1955 that *the Jews are today involved in a battle against the Arabs over the water and the destiny of Israel depends on the outcome of this battle – and if we do not succeed in this battle we will not remain in the future in Palestine.*

24. After Israel announced in 1964 the end of the first phase of diverting the water to the Naqab desert the Egyptian president Jamal Abdel Nasser responded by calling for an Arab summit in Cairo, where he took a decision to form the committee for exploiting the waters of the Jordan River and its subsidiaries. The committee had the task of developing the design and supervising the implementation on transferring the routes of the Banyas and the Hasbani Rivers through a channel linking it to the Yarmouk River through the Golan to eventually lead to a dam which will provide Jordan with water. The program was not implemented because Israel destroyed the infrastructure of the project and that was a prelude to the war of 5 June 1967; where the Israelis occupied as a result of this war the West Bank and the Golan Heights and had a free reign on the water resources in the Tabariya lake, the Jordan river and the Golan Heights.
25. It should be recognised that interest regarding water resources has been present before the creation of Israel and after its creation, where the United States and Britain contributed through various water projects in helping achieve Israeli designs on stealing Arab waters.

Following this brief historical narrative on Israeli designs regarding Arab waters, it becomes necessary to identify and map the water resources in the Arab countries and lands (Golan heights West Bank, Gaza and Lebanon), and to expose Israeli acts that aims to steal these Arab resources while completely and blatantly ignoring all UN and other international resolutions which govern the sharing the water resources between countries.

2. Water Resources in the Golan Heights

The Golan Heights lie in the most south western point of Syria and constitute an important link between Lebanon, Syria, Palestine and Israel. It totals 1860 km², 1158 km² of which is under Israeli occupation since 1967. The Golan Heights are a mountain chain with the large mountain of Jabal Al Sheikh on the northern side which reaches a height of 2225 m above sea level. The Golan heights are considered amongst the most important Arab lands occupied by Israel not only because of its strategic military position but also because it contains the largest collection of Arab waters which together with the Lake of Tabariya is estimated at 4.3 million m³ of water crucial to Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and Jordan. The amount of water stored annually in the area reaches 1.2 million m³.

In the context of this study focus will be placed on the most important water resource within the Golan Heights which is the lake of Tabariya where many of the water sources within the Golan Heights lead and where all the resources of the upper Jordan River lead; and as such this lake has a critical place within the Israeli strategy and Israeli notion of national security.

2.1 Tabariya Lake

Tabariya Lake has a surface area of 170 km² and it can store water up to 4.3 million m³ at the utmost capacity and this is what Israel calls the upper level and it lies at 208 m below sea level. Whereas at the lowest level at the red line which lies at 213m below sea level, the lake stores a total of 3.6 million m³.

The water resources in the Tabariya Lake are renewed from the Golan water resources which lead and pour into it, the most important of which is the upper Jordan River which leads into the lake

from the northern side carrying approximately 844 million m³ annually, and the most important of its subsidiaries include:

- the Hasbani river which starts in Lebanon (the slopes of the Jabal Al Sheikh mountain) and extends approximately 21km in the Lebanese territory and its annual discharge is 150 million m³;
- the Banyas river which starts in the Syrian territories near the village of Banyas in the Golan Heights and extends to a length of 9km, 2 km of which is in Syria and its annual discharge reaches 120 million m³.
- The Leddan river which is one of the most important subsidiaries of the Jordan River and which starts from the slopes of the Jabal Al Sheikh to the west from the village of Banyas and its annual discharge is 270 million m³ and it meets the Banyas River 4km after the demolished Palestinian village (destroyed by the Israelis) of Mansoura and subsequently it unites with the Hasbani River so the three would form the beginning of the Jordan River.
- Also leading to the lake is approximately 65 million m³ of spring water lying within its basin.
- Finally there is 65 million m³ of rain water and 70 million m³ of flood water leading to the lake.

The central basin of the Jordan River constitutes mainly the lake of Tabariya and around 3km of the course of the river extending from it until it meets the Yarmouk River which is considered amongst the most important resources of the Golan Heights and it feeds the Jordan River with 480 million m³ annually. Whereas the lower basin of the Jordan River includes 200km from the river path and starts at the point where it meets the Yarmouk River and ends when it meets the Dead Sea. This basin receives the majority of its waters from the Yarmouk River which contributes 475 million m³ to it annually, and which the most important of its sources and springs lie within the Golan Heights extending 130km 47 km of which are in Syrian land and part of which constitutes the Syrian-Jordanian border.

The United Nations report on the Jordan River and its subsidiaries specifies that the total amount that reaches the Jordan River from all its subsidiaries and in addition to the lake of Tabariya is 1250million m³ annually which leads to the Dead Sea. Despite the fact that the Tabariya Lake tends to be salty, it is widely used in many projects and different regions, the most important of which is the transferring of 450 million m³ of water to the Naqab desert in Southern Israel.

2.2 Masaada Lake

Masaada Lake lies to the eastern side of Masaada village in Northern Golan and it is separated from Jabal Al Sheikh by the Valley of Marj El Yaafoura. It is a lake that has formed over the tip of a volcano which has been inactive and dormant for a long time and it has an area of 1km² and its water resources include flood water. Furthermore it is estimated that within it lies natural aquifers and that it stores 3 million m³ of water.

In addition to that, the Golan Heights is characterized by the intensity of its rain waters especially in the winter season, and as a result of this intensity and the geological composition of its soil it stores

the water underground in many underground aquifers which constitute one of the main contributors to the Jordan river and to the Lakes of Tabariya and Masaada. It is estimated that the amount of water which fall in the Golan Heights is 250 million m³ annually. Therefore there are tens of springs which flow in the Golan Heights with an estimated discharge of 12.5 million m³ annually.

2.3 Valley Alruqad

Valley of Alruqad is considered a shallow valley with a high intensity of water in the winter season where rain and snow water flows to it from the Haramoun Mountain towards the south.

The studies and the data show that the Tabariya Lake and its basin and the Jordan River and its subsidiaries constitute the most important resources of Israel and all these sources are directly connected to the Golan Heights and the Jabal Al Sheikh Mountain. In this context it becomes possible to understand the importance of the Golan Heights and its criticality to the national security of Israel which no doubt constituted one of the reasons for its occupation in 1967.

3. Israel Continues to Steal the Waters of the Golan Heights

1. Subsequent to Israel occupation of the Golan Heights in 1967 it confiscated this important water resource which included all the rivers with their sources in the Golan Heights and Jabal Al Sheikh, namely the Jordan river and all its subsidiaries, the Lake of Tabariya, Lake of Masaada and Valley Alruqad.
2. Israel forcefully expelled most of the original Arab residents of the Golan Heights which as a result were reduced from 130000 to 6400. As for the large population centres including villages, towns and farms these were reduced from 140 centre before the occupation to 5 after the occupation with the outstanding 135 having been fully destroyed by the Israeli subsequent to the occupation.
3. Soon after the situation calmed down, the Israeli authorities started implementing its settlement program. What the Israeli settlers found in the Golan was an abundance of land. These first agriculture settlements were located based on the status of water resources before the occupation; and the Israeli authorities issued a decree prohibiting any Syrian citizen in the occupied Golan Heights from digging any well beyond a depth of 3m. In such a manner Syrian citizens were prevented from exploiting their ground water resources.
4. At the end of June 1967, the Israeli authorities carried out the first water census of the Golan, where more than one hundred springs were discovered. Until the early seventies the Israeli settlers had managed to exploit more than 40km² of agricultural land.
5. The Israeli authorities represented by the Mayh Golan Company developed several water projects distributed across the Golan Heights, to guarantee both the needs of the settlers and their ability to spread and live across the occupied Golan Heights. In the nineties, the water projects reached a total of twelve with a storage capacity of 34 million m³.
6. In addition, in order to facilitate the distribution of water by Israeli authorities, the Mayh Golan Company cleaned the tapline pipeline (which was originally used prior to the occupation to transport oil from Saudi Arabia crossing Golan from South to North, until it eventually reaches the Zahrani refinery along the coast of Southern Lebanon) and used it to transport water inside

the Golan Heights to the various settlements there. The pipeline has a diameter of 30 inches and its capacity reaches 3000 m³ per second.

7. In the autumn of 1968, the Israeli authorities began to use Masaada Lake as a large storage basin, by transforming to it waters from the neighboring Saar River and the flood water of Abou Souaid in winter. It established at the southern end of the lake a pumping station to feed water to the settlements in the Northern Golan Heights. In this manner it succeeded in pumping 1.5 million m³ annually to the settlements and to the Israeli interior.
8. The Israeli projects increased after the law for the annexation of the Golan Heights to Israel issued on 14/12/1981. As a result of this law the occupied Syrian land and its water resources were considered the property of Israel. This law followed another law which set the transformation of citizenship on 10/7/1980 and which stated that the Minister of the Interior has the right to award the citizenship to the residents of the territories occupied in 1967.
In response to the above two laws, the five remaining Arab villages went on strike and refused the Israeli identity. In addition these laws were rejected on an international level and the UN Security Council issued resolution number 497 which considered the annexation law effectively null and void. The UN general council also issued resolution on 5/2/1982 which strongly condemned the refusal of Israel to abide by the above Security Council law.
9. Amongst the most critical and dangerous Israeli projects are the deep ground aquifer wells which are estimated at a cost of 3 million dollars, and which were established by Israel along the cease fire line and under the sight of the UN international forces. Eighteen ground aquifer wells were dug in order to guarantee the continuous flow of water towards the Tabariya Lake and in order not to jeopardize the flooding waters. These wells were connected through a network of pipes which feeds the needs of the settlements and the majority of the water is then moved to the Israeli interior.
10. Israel exploits on an annual basis 60 million m³ of water which had an original course towards the eastern slopes of the Golan Heights leading eventually to Syrian land; which in turn constitutes a threat to ground and surface water which feeds the agriculture land in the Syrian Golan; and which Syrian farmers depend on in the liberated part of the heights where there is a great water shortage.
11. One of the biggest theft projects of Syrian waters is called the cluster of Qniatra. This cluster is located on an occupied piece of land which is part the liberated village of Qniatra. This project transports flood waters away from its natural course towards the Syrian lands and into occupied land under Israeli control. This unveils strategic plans by the Israelis who are attempting even to control the flood waters so it becomes a bargaining chip in any future negotiations.
12. With the aim of preventing Syria and Jordan from water, the occupying forces embarked in June 2006 in creating a landfill dam in the Golan Heights only 10m to the west of the cease fire line and under the sight of the Polish regiment of the UN forces. This earth fill dam has an area exceeding 1km² and a height reaching 8m and has an open storage capacity since any excess water can be directly pumped to the Golan Heights and the Israeli interior. This dam aims mainly to steal and diverting the water from the various sources of the Yarmouk River and preventing it from reaching the Syrian lands, namely the rain water and the flood waters which feed into the Alruqad valley which in turn is the largest subsidiary of the Yarmouk River.
13. The Israeli authorities established in the Golan a series of dams exceeding 7, with a storage capacity of more than 53 million m³. These dams are interconnected with a series of pumping stations to the North of Tabariya Lake to transport water through the national network to the Naqab area in the Israeli interior.

14. All the national and international data shows that Israel continues to steal its water from Syrian land in excess of 813 million m³ annually. This stolen quantity constitutes 25%-30% of the Israeli water consumption.
15. Shamoun Perez declared in 1993 *water before land, even if we agree on land and do not agree on water we will discover that we do not have a real agreement*. Perez statement is the essence of the matter and the headline for all projects which Israel has implemented and which it is planning to implement in the Golan Heights in an attempt to have full control of the water resources there and therefore impose a new reality on the ground to be used in any future negotiations.
16. The largest Israeli crime in the occupied Golan Heights is the pollution of water and soil. Large scale pollution which is affecting the mineral water where Israeli medical sources have asserted for the first time the pollution of the water being bottled by the Mayh Aiden Company on 3/2/2009; and after repeating the test several times the company was ordered to stop pumping water from the Ain Alsloukieh. The same medical sources asserted that the laboratory tests for several springs in the Golan Heights have revealed the presence of pollution. Despite the fact that this may seem an ordinary matter as is portrayed by the Israeli occupying authorities which treated it as a normal consequence for pollution within the pipes; several authorities have intervened ranging from the ministry of health to the ministry of interior security which indicate that the problem maybe be on a much larger scale. Several reports affirm that Israel has distributed nuclear heads in various parts of the Golan Heights and has further planted radiological, nuclear and nitrogen mines in the area along the cease fire line. In addition, several reports show that Israel has buried nuclear waste in the area in containers with a predicted life of 30 to 50 years. These containers are unsafe and subject to cracking in a rapid manner which constitutes a threat on the ground aquifer sources and which threaten the human life and the soil in the area for tens of years to come. Furthermore, the Israeli industrial plants in the Golan Heights form another source of pollution due to the large amount of waste it generates in the form of chemical and biological waste in addition to the waste from settlement and military bases; all of which contribute to the serious deterioration of the environment in the Golan Heights and to the pollution of its waters.

3.1 Obama New Peace Plan

The main axis of the plan is to guarantee the Israeli right to continue exerting its control over the water sources in the Golan Heights; and the plan includes projects which guarantees for both Syria and Israel control over some of the water resources in the area and the right to exploit it. At the centre of the plan *Syria gets the land and organizes the process of arriving at the water resources; while Israel gets the water and organizes the process of arriving to the land*. The other central issue of the American plan is the Peace Garden where it is suggested that one third of the Golan Heights is set aside to create a nature reserve which will be only in form under Syrian jurisdiction, but effectively will be under international jurisdiction and will help keep an Israeli affiliation to the Golan. The project of the nature reserve aims at protecting the water resources in the basin of the Jordan River and in the Syrian territory east to the agreed borders and the nature reserve will be open to everyone.

Given the above facts regarding the water resources, those who developed the American plan view the water of the Jordan River and its subsidiaries and the Tabariya Lake as critical to the water balance of Israel; but much less critical to the water balance of Syria, even if the actual needs of

Damascus for water is increasing at a rapid pace. This is why the plan returns the Banyas area to Syria but keeps the Jordan River, its subsidiaries and Tabariya Lake to Israel. In the plan, Israel is prevented from dismantling the water projects which it created on the Golan Heights, while Syria will work to reduce the environmental threats on the water resources and will avoid re-diverting the Jordan river and will avoid exploiting water from the main water resources between Hasbani, Banyas, Jordan River, Tabariya Lake and Yarmouk River. The projects will be restricted to providing services and meeting local needs only. The plan also excludes the return of the original Syrian residents to the area due to the lack of sufficient services in terms of water resources. It may be concluded that it is an Israeli plan with an American dressing trying to legitimize the theft of water resources in the Golan Heights.

4. Water Resources in the West Bank and Gaza

4.1 West Bank

The water resources is distributed between surface and ground sources and are estimated according to official estimates at 860 million m³ annually, 600 million m³ annually of which is ground waters (70 million m³ annually of which salty unusable water) and 40 to 50 million m³ annually of surface water, and 320 million m³ annually from the Jordan River and its subsidiaries.

Ground water in the West Bank is divided according to three main basins: the western basin, the north eastern basin and the eastern basin.

4.1.1 Western Basin

The western basin is the largest basin in the West Bank with an estimated capacity of 400 m³, 95% of which is formed inside the west bank. The area of this basin is estimated at 9158 km², 1700km of which lies in the West Bank between the cities of Toulkaram and Kalkiliah and constitutes a third of the area of the West Bank. Most of the natural feeding sources of this basin (around 75%) lie in the western hills of the West Bank. But this percentage is continuously decreasing due to the continuous draining of these resources through wells created by the Israelis inside the green line.

4.1.2 North Eastern Basin

The north eastern basin covers the northern part of the West Bank and its rock formation extends to the inside of the green line (inside Israel). It has an area of 1050 km² and lies between the cities of Nablus and Janine and has a capacity of 140 million m³ annually. Israel gets approximately 4 million m³ annually from this basin through three wells it created in its interior which led to the drying of many Palestinian springs and wells in the basin; while Palestinians get approximately 30 million m³.

4.1.3 Eastern Basin

The eastern basin is considered amongst the largest basins and has an area of 2705 km² and it includes the areas and cities of alaghar, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Alkhalil, Ramallah and it constitutes a Palestinian water resource not shared with Israel. Its capacity is estimated at 178 million m³ annually however 70 million m³ of this capacity is considered too salty for use. Studies show that the level of water in this basin is continuously decreasing by a rate of 1,5 m annually which led to the drying of wells in several areas in the south.

In addition the Palestinians have the right to exploit the waters of the Jordan River by an approximated quantity of 320 million m³ annually; however Israel prevents and denies the Palestinians this right since it occupied the West Bank in 1967.

4.2 Gaza

The water resources system in Gaza is divided to two main systems: the lower water system present at a depth of 400m below sea level and is characterized by the high saltiness of its waters and the upper water system which is the main water system for Gaza. The highest level of this ground system reaches 160m in the northern areas and its height decrease gradually to reach 70m in the southern areas. There are no springs in Gaza according to data from the central Palestinian statistics authorities.

In a report issues by the Palestinian water authorities, the amount of rainfall over Gaza in 2007 was estimated at 405mm/year, which is equivalent to 147 million m³ annually. As for the quantity which feeds the ground water basin, it was estimated at 80 million m³ annually while the consumption in 2007 was estimated at 172 million m³, 85 million m³ is for domestic consumption and 87 million m³ for agriculture use.

5. Israel Continues to Steal the Waters of the West Bank and Gaza

Since its occupation of West Bank and Gaza in 1967, Israel has tried to deny the Palestinian people its right to exploit its water resources, and has deliberately issued several military decrees which rendered Palestinian water resources under absolute Israeli jurisdiction. Amongst the most famous of these military decrees are:

1. Decree dated 7/6/1967 which states that *all water present in the lands occupied in 1967 is the property of the State of Israel.*
2. Decree 92 which stated that *full jurisdiction over control of all issues related to water will be the responsibility of the water offices appointed by the Israeli military ruler.*
3. Decree number 58 dated 19/8/1967 which states that *it is absolutely forbidden to establish any water structural project without a prior permit from the water offices who in turn has the right to reject a permit application with providing any reasons.*
4. Decree number 158 dated 1/10/1967 which states that *all springs, wells and water projects are under the direct jurisdiction of the Israeli military ruler.*
5. Decree number 291 for the year 1967 which states that *all water resources in the Palestinian lands are now the property of the state (of Israel) according to Israeli law issued in 1959.*

The Israeli occupying authorities issued these orders despite recognizing that its position on water resources is illegal according to international law and that the management of water resources does not lie within its jurisdiction as an occupying authority as stated in the law on *occupation* present in the Lahai decrees for the year 1907 and the Fourth Geneva Convention in the year 1949. However, in its enforcement and implementation of the above decrees and laws which it issued, Israel carried out a series of procedures and practices to steal the water resources of the West Bank and to deny the Palestinian people their right to their water resources, including the following:

1. Israel denied the Palestinians their intrinsic right to exploit the waters of the Jordan River and the Yarmouk river in the West Bank, knowing full well that the Palestinian share from these rivers amounts to 320 million m³ annually. In addition, Israel continuously pumps water from the Jordan river to the settlements and blocks flood water in the winter season from reaching the course of the Jordan River and from there to the Dead Sea but instead stores it in large reservoirs adjacent to the river.
2. The Israeli occupying authorities destroyed 162 agricultural well along the east Aghwar in what is known as the 90 line, thereby denying the Palestinians their only livelihood resource (agriculture) and furthermore the Palestinians were also denied any right to modernize or develop any of the remaining wells.
3. The occupation put an upper limit to the quantity of water which Palestinian owners of wells are allowed to pump so that it does not exceed 100m³ per hour. This was done by linking all wells to reading metres to have accurate reading measurements.
4. Palestinian farmers were prevented from digging any new wells.
5. Israel established many settlements located just above ground aquifers rich in water. In the West Bank for example, 70% of the settlements were established above the eastern basin. Therefore these settlements consume the waters from this basin at tragic destructive rates with devastating consequences to many Palestinian lands.
6. Israeli authorities dug approximately 500 deep wells along the green line defining the border with the West Bank, extracting from these wells an amount ranging from 367 to 545 million m³ annually directly from the waters of the west basin of the West Bank. These waters are being depleted due to over-pumping on the Israeli side, since the annual renewal of this basin is approximately 362 million m³. Furthermore, Palestinians are not allowed to use more than 5% from the overall production of this basin which is equivalent to only 21 million m³ annually.
7. Israel consumes the Palestinian water with great excess in the West Bank and Gaza without giving any regard to the water balance between supply and consumption on an annual basis. Israel is stealing around 85% of the waters of the ground water basin in the west bank which exceeds 483 million m³ annually. In addition Israel steals 10-20% of the water of Gaza. These stolen water resources constitute more than 25% of Israeli water needs.
8. **The Racist Wall:** the west bank wall is considered an operation being carried out by Israel to exert its full control over Palestinian water resources and to deny the Palestinians from even getting near to these resources. The path of the wall follows the rock composition which forms the ground water basins of the West Bank, and as such the wall isolates the most suitable areas for ground water extraction and storage. In the first phases of the wall, the Palestinians were denied 25% of the average annual output from the western basin which as mentioned before amounts to 21 million m³ annually. In addition 26 wells with an output capacity of 5 million m³ annually were isolated. Furthermore, the digging and construction works disrupted 23 km of irrigation networks. In addition 48 Palestinian wells lying next to the wall are severely affected by security and military procedures in the vicinity of the area. As for the continuing of the wall to the Aghwar area, and what might happen when the eastern wall is built, this will eventually lead to the full isolation of the eastern basin and therefore denying the Palestinians to use its resources.
9. The World Bank report issues on 27 May 2009 states that in some areas of the West Bank, Palestinians live on less than 10-15 litres of water per person per day. This is a very limited amount well below the recommended amount of the World Health Organization (WHO) in order to avoid disease and epidemics. As for the Gaza, the situation is much more dire with only 5-10% of the available water being suitable for drinking. The report also stated that the

committee for water setup in 1995 between Israelis and Palestinians as a temporary measure in the context of the Oslo agreement has failed in achieving adequate results and is in need of reform. While some hopes remain on this agreement to provide more water resources for the Palestinian authorities, in effect this agreement has only shown to be biased against the Palestinians.

The table below shows the vast and excessive variation, unfairness and injustice in the use of water resources in the West Bank between West Bank residents and occupying Israeli settlers.

Population	Daily use of water (million m ³)	Daily average for individual (Litres)
2,350,583 West Bank Residents	155	66
475,760 Israeli Settlers	143	300

Source: Palestinian central statistics body, 2008, and Israeli data centre Btselem

10. In this context, a brief synopsis must be provided to the peace agreement signed between Israel and Jordan and dated 26/10/1994 which asserts the rights of both sides in the water allocations which is fair to each side from both the waters of the Jordan River and the Yarmouk River and from the ground waters of the Araba Valley.

It can be noted that the agreement ignored the Jordanian right to the Tabariya Lake, and it also ignored the Jordanian right to waters from the Upper Jordan River which Israel diverted to the Naqab desert. Israel considered the modifications that it carried out on the main subsidiaries of the rivers as natural events that should not be negotiated upon, while showing full disregard to the environmental consequences that its action has created in the Jordan River and the Dead Sea. This agreement was used to assert Israel's right to the Yarmouk River (which is a Syrian Jordanian River).

If we try to assess what was left for Jordan from the waters of the Yarmouk River we find that the answer is **Not Much!** By examining the channel of east Ghawr which is fed from the Yarmouk River we find that it is almost completely dry, while this channel is considered one of the backbones of agriculture and life in the Jordan Valley as it provides an important share of the water of the Jordanian capital Amman. Out of that large water basin, Jordan only gets 50 million m³ annually, which Israel pumps for Jordan from the Tabariya Lake and Jordan pays in exchange millions of dollars in lieu of the Israeli pumping, operation and maintenance activities. In such a manner Israel has secured its control over Jordan's most important water resources. Hence the question begs itself once more- what has the peace treaty brought Jordan?

6. Common Water Resources Between Southern Lebanon and Israel

The Hasbani River is considered one of the most important common rivers between Lebanon and occupied Palestine, and it is a main subsidiary of the Jordan River and its basin is often described as the upper basin for the areas of Haramoun, Altaym Valley, Arqoub, Golan Heights, Hawla and Tabariya. The river feeds a group of springs outside the Lebanese border including the rivers of Alladan and Banyas. The basin of this river includes mountain summits as high as 2870m above

sea level which witness significant snow and rainfall. The geological nature of the ground allows the storage of in excess of 39% of this fall which then feeds not only the Hasbani and Wazani resources but also the springs of Jawz and Mghara in upper Shebaa Valley amongst others.

The length of the river within the Lebanese border is 21km; however it does not maintain an individual path. Instead it meets the Wazani River 4 km away from the border with occupied Palestine and together with it forms the border line between Lebanon and Syria over several kilometers.

Many Lebanese officials state that Israel gets 150 million m³ from the Lebanese waters, whereas the reality indicates that Israel gets much more than that. We start with the fact that the Hasbani discharge to outside the Lebanese borders varies from 147 to 174 million m³ annually and that the Wazani River discharge does not go below 61 million m³ annually. These numbers have been verified by several relevant experts in the months of September and February which correspond to the months of the peak and the trough in water. Therefore the combined discharge of these rivers becomes 235 million m³ annually. In addition Israel receives from Lebanon through ground water approximately 40 million m³ annually, and it also receives waters from various springs located at the western slopes of Jabal Al Sheikh estimated at 30 million m³ annually. Thereby, the total amount that Israel receives out of waters that clearly originates from Lebanon is 305 million m³ annually.

Estimates from other studies exceed this amount. Several specialists in hydrological basins (both main and secondary basins) which are directly or indirectly linked to underground basins in Israel have reached the following conclusions:

1. The sector of Naquora, Shaqra, and Deir Yassine witness an average flow rate of 69.3 million m³ annually.
2. The sector of Deir Mimas, Faleq, Southern Yamuna and Marjeyoun witness an average flow rate of 12.1 million m³ annually.
3. The sector of Haramoun eastern surface, Sreed well and Shabaa, witness an average flow rate of 58 million m³ annually.
4. The sector of Hasbani and Wazani basins witness an average flow rate of 55.5 million m³ annually.

Therefore the total flow of ground water to occupied Palestine is approximately 194.9 million m³ annually. The contradiction in the data simply means that the Lebanese state is not concerned in carrying out serious studies over the water resources in Lebanon in order to confront and resist Israeli designs on Lebanese water using all available means at the disposal of the Lebanese people.

Having established the quantity that Israel gets from Lebanese waters the next step is to establish the amount that Lebanon gets from water originating from its own land. Lebanon gets very little from the basins of the Wazani and Hasbani; which is limited to less than 7 million m³ annually to guarantee drinking water to more than 40000 citizens in addition to agriculture needs to irrigate 675 Hectares (5.18 of which from Hasbani and 1.7 from Wazani – thereby the total does not exceed 6.88 million m³). This includes eight aquifers in this area. Here it should be recognised that the area of land being irrigated constitutes one quarter of the actual land that can be exploited for

agricultural purposes and which is estimated at 4250 Hectares; while some other studies estimates agricultural land at 10000 hectares.

Therefore the amount that Lebanon receives is very little in comparison to the amount that finds its way to Israel either through surface water or through ground water; while specialist estimate the share of Lebanon from the surface discharge of the Hasbani River at 40% which is equivalent to 59 million m³ annually. All studies and specialists insist on the necessity of preparing a water project with an agricultural and hydroelectrically component for the basin which has a total area of 615 km in order to confront and resist Israeli design on Lebanese waters. However, it seems no one can motivate the Lebanese state to carry out its duty!

Shebaa farms have a total area of approximately 270km² which is equivalent to 2% of Lebanon's land. 60km of the farms remain under occupation today. In 1968 Israel started demolition and displacement activities when it expelled the residents of Shebaa farms which included 14 farms (80% of Shebaa farms) and which were populated by 1200 families who were displaced and their houses were destroyed. The farms were then barricaded with barbed wire. Shebaa farms have a strategic importance because it controls the three sources of the Jordan River (Alladan, Hasbani and Banyas) and also it contains a large ground water basin.

7. Israel Continues to Steal the Lebanese Waters

1. Israeli designs on Lebanese water date back a long time, some of which was addressed in the historical background of this report before and after the emergence of the Zionist movement. Israel tried to achieve its ambitions based on what its prime minister Livi Ashqol stated after the 1967 war *Thirsty Israel cannot stand idle forever while seeing half a million m³ annually of the Litani River being wasted to the Sea and the Israeli channels are now ready to receive this water.* In this context, Israel various attempts to spread its influence over the Lebanese territories is more strategic than being attributed for circumstantial reasons alone. The recurrent Israeli invasions are not only a response to rocket attacks or to guerilla operations; instead it is an attempt to benefit from the escalating situation with Lebanon to create the suitable circumstances and conditions that would allow Israel to enter the Lebanese interior to exert its hegemony and thereby become able to steal the Lebanese water resources and particularly the water of the Litani River.
2. Since the first Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon in 1978, Israel attempted to implement its preplanned agenda to steal Lebanese waters and seize the resources of the Wazani and Hasbani rivers. In this context Israel expedited the expelling of the residents around the source of the Wazani River, barricaded it with barbed wire and started transforming its course at a point near its source at an elevation of 271m to a point in Israel at an elevation of 200-250 m; for the water to be pumped subsequently upstream towards the Israeli strategic channel which links the Tabariya Lake with the Naqab desert.
3. In 1989, Israel started laying pipes with 6 inch diameter from the Ain spring (which is a subsidiary of the Jawz River which in turn is one of the subsidiaries of the Hasbani River) into northern Israel thereby stealing what is estimated as 10 million m³ annually.
4. As a result of the Israeli occupation in 1982, the Israeli occupying authorities exerted its control over 30km of the course of the Litani River; where the Israeli engineers carried out several routes to divert the course of the Litani River; one of which is to divert the water of the Litani River by digging a tunnel 17km long extending from below the Khardali beneath the village of

Deir Mimas into the Hawla Valley where water is transported by gravity action between these two points, in order to secure 150 million m³ of fresh water to irrigate an area of 25 Hectares.

5. Since 1983 Israel has been stealing the waters of Jabal Amel Water authority, where the Israeli designs and violations were clear during their occupation and may be continuing until now in several places which have not yet been surveyed properly in order to assess how much water is being stolen. Israel is also stealing Lebanese waters through tens of ground aquifers along the border with Lebanon and through pumping the ground waters of the basin above which the city of Marjeyoun and the Valley of Khiyam lie. It is proving difficult to estimate the number of aquifers and the quantity of water being pumped and stolen.
6. In 1990, Israel completed the final stage inside its territory of the project to divert the waters of the Litani River into the Tabariya Lake through the use of underground pipes. As such the theft of the Litani waters is ready and Israel wanted Lebanon to give legitimacy to this operation in return of withdrawing from South Lebanon. In other words Israel would have adhered by UN resolution 425 in exchange to Lebanon giving up its right over its water resources.

Subsequent to the Israeli withdrawal from the South of Lebanon, except for the Shebaa farms and the Hills of Kfar-Shouba, the Litani, Wazani and Hasbani waters all remain within the scope of designs of Israeli projects which have been made public. The relative restraint is merely an attempt to buy time until the direct negotiations or until another opportunity for Israel to invade Lebanon and again try to exert control by force over these water resources.

7. Projects planned by Israel to exploit Lebanese waters (Alyashaa Kali Project):
 - A project to generate electric energy from the Hasbani waters. The project exploits 100 million m³ annually (80-% of the river capacity) by creating a storage basin inside the Lebanese borders at an elevation of 300m and establishing a pressurised pipe network from the basin to the electric energy generation station which will be located inside Israel in the vicinity of the course of the river, at an elevation of 120m. The project has an estimated cost of 24 million US dollars and will produce an energy estimated at 40 million KW/hr on an annual basis.
 - A project to divert the course of the Litani River to the storage basin of the Tabariya Lake by digging a tunnel 6-8 m deep to divert the Litani waters to the Hasbani or to the Ouyoun River. There are two available options to achieve this project: the first option to divert to the Hasbani above the Litani pool and the designed Khardali storage basin; and the second option to divert the Litani waters to the Ouyoun River at the sloped of the designed basin.

The recommendations of the Alyashaa Kali Project consist of annexes and follow up recommendations from earlier projects which have already been implemented (part on Lebanese land and part on Israeli land). The outstanding recommendations are then in need of implementation deep in the Lebanese territories in order to maximize Israeli exploitation and theft of Lebanese water.

The various available studies confirms the increase in the water deficit and the subsequent decrease in the Israeli strategic water storage which renders the water security of Israel in jeopardy; which in turn may prompt the aggressive state of Israel to carry out further aggressions on Lebanon under the pretense of the presence of resistance militias or under the pretense of a military threat originating from South Lebanon. This was the pretense under which Israel carried out all its aggressive wars to invade Lebanon. It must be realized that Lebanon has always been

and still is in the circle of danger from Israeli attacks; its water resources are under continuous threat of being stolen and violated by the Israeli enemy.

8. Conclusions

1. The various statistics show that what Israel gets in terms of water resources from outside its borders reaches above 68% of all water consumption, distributed as follows: 28% from Jabal Al Sheikh and Lebanon; 25% from the West Bank; and 15% from the Gaza Sector. In this context it becomes possible to comprehend the reason why Israel remains adamant and aggressive in holding on to all water sources and resources since it recognizes that water is an important part of its existence.
2. The international consulting firm Price Waterhouse Coopers confirms that *two thirds of the water being consumed in Israel comes from the occupied lands and one half originates in water infrastructure projects which did not lie within the borders of Israel before 1967*. While in the past decades wars and comprises in the region were motivated by the desire to seize and control the petroleum resources, it seems increasingly likely that the struggle for water is going to be more aggressive and more acute since it is a vital struggle for survival.
3. Israel attempts to increase the quantity of stolen water with the aim of imposing a new reality and by claiming that its water rights are larger than it is getting when it comes to shared water resources. The central premises for sharing the water between countries is based on the theory of limited sovereignty which states *any country must take its partners into consideration when it comes to water resources*; while Israel has abstained from voting on the treaty for using international water courses for non navigation purposes which was passed by the UN general assembly in 1997.
4. The Zionist state was created on the state of Palestine by pillaging and violating all the basic rights of the Palestinian people as it stole their land; expelled and massacred the people; killed defenseless women, children and the elderly; displaced millions; and still aims at destroying the Palestinian people through stealing their waters; the most important resource necessary for the sustainability of life in Palestine. Hence Palestinians today are suffering from water scarcity, and are subject to daily continuous thirst. Hence in a way one can conclude that the racist Israeli practices are telling the Palestinians *if we don't manage to kill you by bullets, if we don't manage to kill you by the embargo, if you don't die in our prisons, if you don't die from hunger; then we will deny you water thereby certainly killing you from thirst*.
5. Israel is asking the Palestinians to accept the unjust reality that Israel created regarding the distribution of water resources which it created through consistent theft and violation of the basic human rights of the Palestinian people. The International organizations, NGOs, UN organizations and all humanitarian organizations admit the tragic conditions and circumstances under which the Palestinian people live. However they do not attempt to effect any changes that will condemn Israeli practices and force Israel to put an end to its unlawful and racist practices of stealing Arab water resources; nor do they impose any measures on Israel to force it to adhere to international law. On the contrary, international organizations either take the Israeli side or succumb to its pressures and accept its political discourse that the Palestinian people should accept the reality on the ground; and so these international organizations limit their intervention to fixing few water networks and carrying out projects for water desalination and refinement of wastewater and raise awareness of Palestinian people on how to rationalize their use of water!

6. Israel was able to steal most of the water of the West Bank and Gaza in its capacity as the occupying authority, where the remaining water know is polluted, salty and does not exceed 10-14% of the original Palestinian water resources. Furthermore, Israel stole the waters of the Golan Heights and exerted its control over the sources of the rivers and ground aquifers; and even seized control of flood waters which used to flow towards the Syrian land. In addition Israel stole the waters of Tabariya Lake, the Jordan River, and the Dead Sea and is still stealing waters of the Lebanese Rivers in South Lebanon while it has designs over the Litani River. By using constant threats of a destructive war, Israel has also prevented Lebanon from exploiting its waters which it has a legitimate right to do, thereby preventing Lebanon from establishing any projects on the Hasbani and Wazani Rivers and dams on the Litani River. In this manner Israel has pillaged and violated all the water resources in the region through the use of brute oppressive force.
7. It should be recognized that many studies confirm the increase in the water deficit in Israel and therefore the decrease in the strategic water reserve of Israel which in turn jeopardizes its strategic water security. Against this background, it can be seen that Israel may opt to embark on new aggressive adventures and wars under any pretense to invade Lebanon and confiscate its water resources especially the waters of the Litani River. Therefore, Lebanon must put forward a plan to defend its land and its water resources which relies on its army, its people and its establishments before it becomes too late. The national resistance movement which started as soon as the Israeli invasion took place in 1982 and managed to liberate Lebanon from the Israeli aggressor without any preconditions or constraints is also capable of protecting its water resources against the greedy designs of the Israeli enemy.
8. The condition of water resources in the Arab countries adjacent to the Israeli entity is continuously being worsened in view of Israeli designs, plots and exploitations of these resources. An exploitation that is completely unlawful and unjust and is only being met with a deafening silence on the Arab side. Instead of this silence (that seems to remain unaffected by all the warning statements being issued by Arab research centres and studies by specialists); what is required is for the Arabs to start resisting this situation on all levels and through all means to put an end to this unlawful and unjust exploitation of our water resources before it becomes too late.
9. Based on this miserable and bitter reality, it may be concluded that the logic and rationale of dealing with the important issue of water resources in the Middle East varies significantly and radically between the various parties concerned with this issue. And therefore we find on the one hand Israel gives the utmost importance to the water issue and considers it an issue which has strategic dimensions that can jeopardize the strategic Israeli national security and as such plans for it and studies all its aspects very carefully. Furthermore we find Israel implementing its plans and projects by adopting a long term approach without deviating from its integral aims in this regard. On the other hand we find Arab officials treating the water issue as a marginal issue susceptible for negotiations; where we see that as a result of the negotiation process between the Jordanians and the Israelis and between the Palestinian authority and the Israelis there is a situation on the ground which is a waterless Jordan and a thirsty Palestinian population – where as usual the stronger party imposes its unfair conditions on the weaker!
10. Perhaps the most important threat facing the Arab strategic water security is the unbalanced water equation between the Arabs and the adjacent countries; where the Arab share is to a large extent dependent on non Arab action and desires. The water projects in adjacent countries such as turkey and Ethiopia on the rivers of Euphrates and the Nile respectively; are being carried out with Israeli support, where land is being bought and dams are being built

using Zionist money and Zionist companies along the Euphrates River in Turkey which in turn decrease Syria's and Iraq's share of the waters of this River. Further more Ethiopia is being supported by Israel and encouraged to setup projects on the Nile River. All this may be considered as a form of waging war on Arab water resources.

11. In the final analysis, we must ask the following: this comprehensive Israeli strategy which is well planned and well detailed in all its aspects with clear, defined and measurable objectives and tools to achieve those objectives – what is the most suitable way to resist this Israeli strategy? Is it through the deafening silence and is it through burying our heads in the sand as the Arab officials seem to be doing? Is it through the peace for land deals that leave the Arabs with lands upon which they don't exert any control over their water resources? What sovereignty on any land can one have without the right to exploit and have access to water resources?

Against all the above, we call upon all Arab people and we call upon all the progressive forces worldwide to stand united to confront these Israeli practices that pillage and violate lands, waters and resources without any restraint and without any regard for international laws and regulations.

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