



ORSAM WATER BULLETIN

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ORSAM WATER BULLETIN

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❖ In Syria, residents of Aleppo struggle with a water shortage

The Syrian city of Aleppo is suffering an extreme water shortage days after an antigovernment Islamist faction shut down two pumping stations, government officials and a pro-opposition monitoring group said.

The shutdown has left more than 2 million residents struggling to find water in the city, which is divided between sections loyal to President Bashar Assad and those controlled by opposition forces in the country's civil war.

Water shortage in Aleppo, Syria

A boy in Aleppo, Syria, with a cargo of water. (Baraa al-Halabi / AFP/Getty Images)

Aid organizations and the government have been scrambling to find alternative water supplies. Some people, including children, have resorted to scooping up murky water alongside roads. Residents turned to social media for discussions of where clean water could be obtained.

Al Nusra Front, an Al Qaeda-affiliated rebel faction, shut down the two major water pumping stations serving the city more than a week ago, according to various official and news media accounts. The action caused hundreds of gallons of water to be lost into the nearby Quwayq river, which is normally used for sewage, activists said.

Activists claimed that an Al Nusra Front commander ordered the move in an attempt to deny water to government-held areas of the city.

The Syrian government, which is regularly accused of targeting civilians in Aleppo and elsewhere with massive bombardment campaigns, denounced the water cut-off as a crime and a severe human rights violation.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based pro-opposition group, also called the water cutoff a crime and warned of a looming humanitarian disaster.

"It is shameful that they would commit the same practices as the regime, cutting off water from residents," Rami Abdul-Rahman, head of the Observatory, said Monday in an interview with France 24 News.

Al Nusra Front maintained its characteristic media silence and did not comment on the issue.

Differences of opinion have emerged on the cause of the water shutoff, with some people saying the government's bombardment of the city ultimately resulted in the damage to the pumping stations and others maintaining that unauthorized tampering with the equipment seemed to be the cause.

The water crisis comes after an electricity shutdown that had crippled the city for more than a week in April. That incident brought a rare moment of detente between opposing sides in the war, when the government agreed to stop its barrel bombing campaign if rebels would continue to provide power to areas under its control.

The government had also provided diesel fuel required to power the pumping station under the monitoring of the Syrian Red Crescent in Aleppo, although it was unclear whether that deal remained in place when the water problems began.

Activists early Tuesday reported a gradual return of water pressure in areas close to one of the water pumping stations. It was unclear why.

"In Syria, residents of Aleppo struggle with a water shortage", 13/05/2014, online at:
http://www.latimes.com/world/middleeast/la-fg-syria-aleppo-water-shortage-20140512-story.html?utm_source=Circle+of+Blue+WaterNews+%26+Alerts&utm_campaign=d37ff4aa3e-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c1265b6ed7-d37ff4aa3e-250657169

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❖ UN chief condemns water cut in Aleppo

A man collects stagnant murky water from the side of a road in a rebel-held area in Aleppo. Residents of Syria's second city Aleppo have been without water for many weeks. – AFP

BEIRUT — The United Nations chief has condemned a cut in water supplies in the northern Syrian city of Aleppo that he said has deprived at least 2.5 million people of access to potable water.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that preventing people access to safe water denies them a “fundamental right.” In a statement released by his office late Friday, Ban noted that denying civilians essential supplies is a breach of international and humanitarian law.

Rebels from the Al-Qaeda-linked Nusra Front shut down main water pumping station in Aleppo, Syria’s largest city, nearly two weeks ago to punish civilians living on the government-controlled side of the divided metropolis, said Rami Abdurrahman of the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

Abdurrahman, whose group collects information from activists inside Syria, said on Saturday that the Nusra Front has tried to restart the water station, but that supplies are erratic and remain largely cut.

“They don’t have specialists to deal with the pumps, and they’ve damaged the station,” Abdurrahman said. “They’ve tried to resume pumping. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn’t. The water comes and goes, but until now it’s not flowing as usual.”

Some residents have resorted to drinking polluted well water distributed in buckets and plastic jerry cans

“UN chief condemns water cut in Aleppo”, 17/05/2014, online at:
<http://www.saudigazette.com.sa/index.cfm?method=home.regcon&contentid=20140518205581>

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❖ Water war takes its toll on Aleppo

BEIRUT: Pro- and anti-Assad Aleppo residents, as well as rights groups, have slammed what they call the collective punishment of civilians by suspending services and utilities, as a water crisis there entered its 12th day.

While water began return to some areas in Aleppo Tuesday, large swathes of both eastern, mainly rebel-held areas and western, government-controlled parts of the city remained dry Thursday, affecting an estimated 1 million people.

The Syrian Foreign Ministry told the U.N. Wednesday that rebels were using “collective punishment” against civilian populations by targeting water supplies, something it has been accused of itself through blockades of rebel areas and the indiscriminate use of “barrel bombs” on civilian neighborhoods in Aleppo.

Those tactics prompted Islamist rebel groups to cut electricity to regime-held neighborhoods in the city in April in order to pressure the regime to ease its barrel campaign.

Under a deal with the Al-Qaeda-linked Nusra Front, the local Shariah Committee and the Syrian government, the rebels agreed to restore power if the regime ceased using barrel bombs on rebel-controlled areas, threatening to cut the water supply lines to regime-held neighborhoods if they failed to do so.

The deal collapsed, and the barrel bombs continued to fall.

Rebel factions, meanwhile, traded blame over the water cut, which affected large areas of their own opposition support base, as civilian anger and misery mounted in the city.

A spokesman for the Islamic Front coalition involved in the negotiations over electricity accused the Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIS), an Al-Qaeda splinter group, of cutting the water supply at the Khafsah station outside Aleppo.

“The water supply was cut from the ISIS-dominated area,” the spokesman said. “The Islamic Front protects civilians.”

Others said the Nusra Front, which controls the main Suleiman al-Halabi station, botched an attempt to deprive regime-held areas of water and ended up affecting the whole city.

The Islamic Front spokesman blamed the regime's bombing campaign for damaging water pumps and the nearby Sakhour electricity plant, which powers the Suleiman al-Halabi station. He said water was partially restored when a deal was reached with the government, the Red Crescent and the local Shariah Committee to bring fuel to the electricity plant.

"So when the electricity plant started to function again, the water station of Suleiman al-Halabi functioned as well," the spokesman said, speaking via Skype.

The civilians on the ground were less discerning.

With bottled water prices soaring to over 100 pounds a bottle due to high demand, residents have resorted to drinking from wells and drains, which has led to illness.

One 66-year-old resident, an opposition supporter who lives near the front lines bordering the Old City, told The Daily Star that he had not showered for 12 days and questioned the strategy of starving civilians of resources.

"I have no idea about the difference between the rebel groups; who is Nusra and who is ISIS or who is FSA [Free Syrian Army]? No one knows who did it, and I blame everyone," he said, requesting anonymity for fear of recriminations.

"One side is putting pressure on the other and the other is responding. ... Maybe it was the rebels, but I find it strange, because why would they do that? Why would they punish us in the rebel areas when we support them?"

A university student in his 20s, a regime supporter residing in government-held western Aleppo, blamed "armed groups" for the shortage, adding that random mortar fire by rebels in regime-held neighborhoods was terrifying the community.

"People here are disgusted at the situation in general," he said. "Like the barrel bombs that the regime is using against the rebels, they are using mortars and gas cylinders to shell the regime-held areas."

“Where are our human rights?”

Another former Aleppo resident, Fadi, living in the U.S. but with family in Syria, said using civilians to pressure leadership on either side produced only greater polarization.

“They are targeting civilians to put pressure on the regime side, but it doesn’t work. They’re just convinced now that the rebels are trying to kill them. People hate both sides now.”

The Islamic Front spokesman denied the campaigns were taking a toll on the rebels’ image.

“Civilians are now distinguishing between the groups,” he said.

“The Islamic Front has several activities to support the civilians, like establishing bakeries, fixing and running schools, paving the roads and managing the water supply.”

“People will support those who help them and understand their pain and suffering.”

He said the water campaign was not a mistake.

“The aim of this action was protecting civilians.”

Nadim Houry, Middle East director of Human Rights Watch in Beirut, said while it remained unclear exactly who cut the water supply and why, the act could amount to a war crime because it “intentionally targets civilians.”

“This is an extension of siege politics and strategy that has been applied by both sides,” he said.

“Starving people, cutting off water supplies, cutting off electricity ... all make civilians suffer as a way to pressure the other warring party. It is simply not an acceptable negotiating tactic.”

“Water war takes its toll on Aleppo”, 16/05/2014, online at: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/May-16/256614-water-war-takes-its-toll-on-aleppo.ashx#axzz326O1fBj3>

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❖ UN concerns over "Water War" in Iraq

Baghdad (IraqiNews.com) Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq (SRSG), Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, expressed his shock at the water being turned into an instrument of terror against the Iraqi people. A statement by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq quoted Mladenov, as saying “The deliberate flooding of the Abu Ghraib area has caused the displacement of over 12,000 families and submerged hundreds of houses, including at least four schools.” “Mladenov also reiterated the UN’s readiness to continue working with the Ministry of Displacement and Migration and the local authorities to address the urgent humanitarian needs in Abu Ghraib, of which access to safe drinking water remains a priority,” the statement added, noting that “He also assured that the UN Humanitarian Agencies will also work with the Government and the local authorities on assessing the damages from the floods and planning for the reconstruction of an area that has some of Iraq’s richest agricultural land.”

“Expressing his concern that the “water war” will have long-term negative humanitarian, health, social and economic consequences for the affected communities, Mr. Mladenov called on the Government, Iraqi Security Forces, local authorities and tribal leaders to work jointly and quickly to restore legitimate control over the flow of the river Euphrates. “Those who are now in control of the barrage in Fallujah should understand the consequences of their actions on the lives of tens of thousands of Iraqis,” the statement concluded.

“UN concerns over "Water War" in Iraq”, 14/05/2014, online at: <http://www.iraqinews.com/baghdad-politics/srsg-mladenov-shows-concerns-over-quot-water-war-quot-in-iraq/>

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❖ Toward a Secure and Sustainable Water Future for Kurdistan and Iraq

MONTREAL, Canada – As tensions between Erbil and Baghdad resumed earlier this year, some voices in the Kurdistan Region called for waging a “water war” against the central government by blocking Kurdish rivers that water Iraqi farms.

Water wars are a possibility. But there are many examples of cooperation showing that water wars are the exception. Countries sharing water resources find ways of cooperating.

“Evidence shows that throughout history armed conflicts over water tend to be the exception rather than the rule,” said Dr. Therese Sjomander Magnusson, Director of Transboundary Water Management at the Stockholm International Water Institute. “Cooperation over water is the recurring norm,” Magnusson told *Rudaw* in a telephone interview from Sweden.

Dr. William Cosgrove, a water expert at the International Institute for Applied System Analysis and former president of the World Water Council, explained that countries reach common ground on water, even those at odds.

“There are far more agreements about the use of trans-boundary waters than conflicts,” Cosgrove told *Rudaw*. “For example, in the Middle East, between Palestine and Israel there is only one detailed agreement, and it is an agreement on the use of water. Amongst all the things that they could fight about or disagree about, the only one on which they reached an agreement is that the water is a common good.” Cosgrove told *Rudaw* from his home in Montreal, Canada.

It was after Baghdad blocked monthly budget payments to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) that some Kurdish officials advocated Kurdistan could trump Baghdad by cutting the flow of waters to southern Iraq.

Baghdad’s need for northern waters is clear: Numerous times, the central government has placed demands before the KRG for greater water supplies, which irrigate farms in Diyala and Kirkuk.

Water from Kurdistan, water warriors had suggested, could be turned down through major dams like Dukan.

Dukan and Darbandikhan are two major dams which bring these rivers to a halt to turn turbines and produce electricity. The surplus is released daily to the central parts of Iraq, to irrigate farmlands.

A number of rivers, mainly the Greater and Lower Zab originate from the Kurdish mountains. Sirwan River as well passes through the Kurdistan Region, though it starts from Iran.

Research has shown that upstream countries, which have water, often are disinterested in cooperating with downstream areas. That is also true of Kurdistan and Iraq.

“The precipitation falls on their country and they would like to keep it there. They do not want to reach agreements on sharing with other people who don’t have any rainfall or do not have as much rainfall,”

Cosgrove explained about upstream regions.

But should Kurdistan plan to cut water to southern Iraq, that would become a case for the International Court of Justice, he told *Rudaw*.

“They don’t have the right to cut water. If they were to do it, it would become a case before the International Court of Justice in the Hague, Netherlands,” Cosgrove said.

In the case of Kurdistan, the stream from which it takes its water flows in from Syria, which in turn flows in from Turkey.

“In fact, the biggest debate is in Turkey” noted Cosgrove. “They are building new dams in Turkey and the amount of water that is coming down, all the way downstream to Iraq, is threatened by dams that are being built. That can have an effect on everybody downstream, all the way to Iraq.”

For water issues in a regional context, cooperation is key, experts told *Rudaw*. Tensions amongst countries being interdependent on water can be relieved through active cooperation.

“If they want to deal with it peacefully, they would start by sharing information, and by working together to find the way to have the best economic results, to optimize the economic results for all of the countries that share the river,” Cosgrove said.

For Kurdistan, which is working to offer an attractive environment to pull investors, water issues will need to be taken into account. Water access and water stability is in fact an incentive that attracts corporations looking for new opportunities internationally.

On World Water Day in 2002, then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan warned that, “Fierce national competition over water resources has prompted fears that water issues contain the seeds of violent conflict.” But he also noted that, “If all the world’s peoples work together, a secure and sustainable water future can be ours.”

“Toward a Secure and Sustainable Water Future for Kurdistan and Iraq”, 18/05/2014, online at:
<http://rudaw.net/english/middleeast/18052014>

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❖ **Despite Abundant Water, Kurdistan Prone to Future Shortages**

ERBIL, Kurdistan Region – Despite public obsession with oil, Iraqi Kurdistan’s water may be its most important natural resource. After all, you can’t extract oil without massive quantities of water at your disposal.

Water is the source of life, as the well-worn phrase puts it. But it is also the source of wars, bitter disputes and cash.

Yet, despite a wealth of H₂O, the Kurdistan Region may face serious water shortages in the near future.

During the spring and summer, melting snows in the mountains fill river basins and produce gushing waterfalls, to the delight of tourists escaping the southern heat.

The region holds five rivers: the Great Zab, the Little Zab, the Sirwan and Alwan. While these rivers may not be household names like the Tigris and Euphrates -- both of which run south of the region’s borders -- they carry almost all of Iraq’s locally sourced surface water.

About 50 percent of Kurdish water comes from within the region, in contrast with Iraq’s eight percent. Out of that eight percent, most comes from the Kurdistan Region (and 71 percent comes from Turkey), lending the south considerably less water security than the semi-autonomous northern region.

According to the KRG, the region has 5,174 natural springs, the vast majority of which are in the northern Dohuk governorate near the Turkish border. This has been very good for water bottling companies, one of the region’s main industrial products.

There is reason to worry about rapidly diminishing water sources, however. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) concluded that global warming and climate change have led to a fall in precipitation rates across the country.

Together with the construction of new dams outside the country, these factors have contributed to a 20 percent fall in available water for every citizen between 2000 and 2010.

Droughts are becoming more common and more severe over time. Water shortages are the most dangerous for the Erbil governorate, where 46-56 percent of cropland is affected by droughts, according to the UNDP. This is one of the highest rates in Iraq. By contrast, only 4-5 percent of crops are affected in Dohuk or Sulaimani.

Despite universal drought increases, water shortages are more severe in the south than in the Kurdistan Region. This is because dams in Syria and Turkey have dramatically reduced the flow of water down the Tigris and Euphrates. Fifty percent of the Tigris' water comes from Turkey, as does 90 percent of the Euphrates'. Water levels have fallen so much on the Iraqi side that salt water has infiltrated the rivers more than 150 kilometers from the Persian Gulf.

Dams upstream of the Kurdistan Region have been far less disruptive. Turkish Dams along the Great Zab are not heavily tapped for irrigation projects, one of the major ways dams reduce water levels downstream.

This could easily change if Iran completes a series of planned dams in the future. Some 60-70 percent of the water upstream from Darbanikhan and Dokan, two of Kurdistan's largest dams, comes from Iran. "If they follow through, it will be a disaster," explains Akram Rasul, the head of the KRG's Directorate of Dams and Reservoirs. Rapidly declining water levels can be catastrophic for the water quality, not to mention ecosystems, agriculture, fishing, hydro-power and oil production.

With exponential increases in water usage due to a growing population and booming economy -- meaning more industrial and agricultural demand -- the region has plans to build more dams. A lot more. While there are three large dams and seven smaller ones under construction, Rasul expects to have 40 dams by 2018.

While the directorate commissions environmental impact assessments (EIAs) for each of the projects, many NGOs like Nature Iraq have expressed concerns about the potential impact of dams. Only time will tell how they will reshape the landscape, affect the region's plant and animal life, and the flow of water both within the country and to the rest of Iraq.

One area where activists and the directorate agree is that unprocessed sewage is contaminating rivers and dams at a major cost to Kurdish citizens. “Unfortunately, this is in the hands of the municipalities,” Rasul sighs. “All of Erbil’s human waste is dumped into the Greater Zab.”

Groundwater is another issue. The region has approximately 20,000 official wells, not counting many more illegal water sources. A source in the oil and gas industry told *Rudaw* that one of the first things an oil and gas company does for a local community near an exploration or production site is to build a well. While this is good for the village in the short term, the cumulative increase in water usage -- without planning and management of a central water authority -- could quickly decimate the estimated five million cubic meters of groundwater in the Kurdistan Region.

Rasheed Gergis, head of the Water Reservation Association, worries about responsible water habits more than any other problem. The issue is a lack of incentives, he thinks, not antisocial behavior: people pay for water by property size in the region, not according to a metered usage.

“People are still watering anything and everything they want, at zero additional cost,” he says. “They don’t realize it’s scarce. Kurdistan’s not rich in water, at least if people continue to use it at current rates.”

According to the Ministry of Planning, individual water usage in the region is almost four times the World Bank Standard.

“Despite Abundant Water, Kurdistan Prone to Future Shortages”, 17/05/2014, online at:
<http://rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/17052014>

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❖ Israel's Water Genocide

Water is a necessity to all forms of life. Access to clean water is an essential precondition for the viability of any community. Sanitation, especially wastewater treatment, is also essential for public health, for protection of the environment, and for water reservation. International laws and universally accepted sanitation standards have been set up to protect the right to access clean water and to protect environment and water conservation. In occupied Palestine the Israeli government is violating all these rights, and had turned water into weapon of slow graduated genocide.

Many Palestinian cities in the West Bank and especially in the Gaza Strip face chronic clean water shortages. The rural communities are virtually deprived of water and depend mainly on very expensive tank-water supplies. In the main cities Palestinians have access to an average of only 70 liters of water per person per day for domestic use and personal hygiene, much less than the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended minimum of 100 liters. In the rural areas Palestinians are surviving on 20 – 30 liters of water per person per day, while adjacent illegal Israeli colonies (settlements) built on stolen Palestinian land enjoy unlimited constant supply of water for personal as well as recreational (swimming pools, parks and gardens) use. It was estimated that 44% of Palestinian children in the rural areas suffer from diarrhea – the biggest killer of children under 5 years old in the world- because of poor water quality and hygiene standards.

According to the UNHRC Israeli “Settlements benefit from enough water to run farms and orchards, and for swimming pools and spas, while Palestinians often struggle to access the minimum water requirements. Some settlements consume around 400 l/c/d, whereas Palestinian consumption is 73 l/c/d, and as little as 10-20 l/c/c for Bedouin communities which depend on expensive and low quality tanker water.”

Aware of the dire water situation in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, donor countries had supported Palestinian Authority's efforts to develop the water and sanitation sector, and had specified funds for the construction of water reservoirs, wastewater treatment facilities, and the repair and expansion of water and sewage networks. Emergency Water Sanitation and Hygiene Group (EWASH), a coalition of 30 leading humanitarian agencies, have been working with Palestinian local authorities to identify and to respond to water, sanitation and hygienic needs to Palestinian communities.

Under international humanitarian laws water resources and projects, including water sanitation and hygiene (WASH) infrastructures are considered civilian facilities essential for the survival of the population, and thus are protected from destruction under any circumstance. Yet the Israeli government, with its long record of violating many international laws, with the cooperation of its national water company Mekorot and the Israeli agri-industrial firm Mehadrin had adopted systematic, grave, malicious and discriminatory policies to hinder Palestinian access to water in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, combined with massive theft of water resources.

A report by the United Nations Human Rights Council states that the two Israeli Mekorot and Mehadrin companies severely undermine Palestinians' access to water, especially in occupied Jordan Valley, siphoning Palestinian wells and springs water to the illegal Israeli colonies (settlements) in the West Bank. Palestinian water is stolen and piped into Israel at no cost. A fraction of it is then piped back and sold to Palestinian cities. In this way Israel is stealing from Palestinians both their water and their money.

In Oslo II agreement a Palestinian Israeli Joint Water Committee (JWC) was established to manage water resources and wastewater treatment facilities. The Israeli government exercises a veto-like power within JWC and through slow bureaucracy blocks most licenses and permits for new water facilities in the West Bank, conditioning them on Palestinian reciprocal approval of projects in the illegal colonies (settlements); an arrangement the Palestinian Authority rejects for fear of legitimizing these colonies.

The ability of the Palestinian Authority to develop its WASH sector to meet its national priorities has been severely limited by Israeli policies. Palestinians have not been able to build the needed large scale water service infrastructures to secure water and sanitation services to its population. Between 1995 and 2011 the Palestinian Authority submitted 30 projects for wastewater treatment plant projects to the JWC for approval. Only four of these, related to minor repair, were accepted. Again in 2011 the Palestinian Authority submitted 38 projects to rehabilitate agricultural water wells but the JWC approved only three of them.

Due to the Israeli imposed artificial water shortages and lack of wastewater treatment facilities and sewage networks the majority of Palestinians resorted to the old practice of constructing privately owned water wells, cesspits and septic tanks. In the rural areas Palestinians depend on rain water

gathering pools, cisterns and water tanks. This increases the risks of public health and damage to the environment.

Besides the Israeli protracted bureaucracy and the open theft of Palestinian water, the Israeli government had adopted and implemented unethical and illegal policies and practices to destroy Palestinian water resources and to contaminate their farmland to actuate Palestinian self- evacuation of a coveted area and the spread of deadly disease among their vulnerable children. The terrorist Israeli army routinely carries what is called demolition orders of alleged unlicensed communal water cisterns and water wells in privately owned farmland. Many of these cisterns and wells are hundreds of years old; older than the illegal state of Israel itself. The demolition orders also include WASH structures and water tanks supplied to Palestinian rural areas, and animal and tractor driven water tanks. In 2011 alone Israeli army had demolished 89 WASH structures in the West Bank including 21 wells, 34 cisterns and many small fixed water tanks given to the rural households especially those in the Jordan Valley. Such demolition also included the razing of vegetable gardens and the destruction of animal barns and storage sheds. This destruction violates Article 53 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits the destruction of private or public property, and it is a clear violation of the right to water, a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, protected by Article 11 of the International covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The Israeli government uses such denial of water to trigger people displacement, particularly in areas slated for colonial expansion, especially since these communities are mostly farmers, who depend on water for their livelihoods. Cutting off Palestinian communities from their water resources usually precedes dispossession of land for new colonial projects.

The 700 kilometer Israeli-built separation/apartheid wall, been under construction since 2002, has been deliberately snaked through the West Bank to include, on the Israeli side, the rich fertile Palestinian agricultural land with large groundwater aquifers, especially within Jenin, Qalqilya, and Tulkarem provinces. The wall has further reduced Palestinian access to water and has resulted into the loss of access to 49 water wells and reservoirs used for drinking and agricultural purposes.

In the besieged Gaza Strip water resources and water treatment facilities seem to be one of the main targets of the Israeli air raids and land incursions. Sewage pumping stations, wastewater treatment facilities, main city water reservoirs and agricultural cisterns, many of them predate the illegal

establishment of Israeli state, sustained direct bombing by Israeli war planes. Since 2005 Israeli military incursions had intentionally destroyed at least 300 agricultural wells located in the Israeli designated buffer zone.

Scores of wells, rainwater harvesting cisterns, roof water tanks, and many miles of water main pipes and other farm irrigation networks have been deliberately targeted and destroyed by Israeli forces during their military operations. During the 2008/09 Israeli “Cast Lead” offensive against Gaza, the Israeli air raids, artilleries and military tanks targeted Gaza's vital water resources; pumping stations, wastewater treatment facilities and sewage treatment plants causing damages worth \$6 million.

The situation in Gaza is especially dire. Palestinians rely entirely on the already depleted, saltwater-contaminated and sewage-polluted aquifer, whose water is unfit for human consumption. The illegal inhumane Israeli imposed siege restricts the import of many essential goods including the fuel necessary to run Gaza's single power station. Without electricity wastewater treatment facilities and running water pumps cannot operate, resulting sewage pollution. It is estimated that 89 million liters of sewage flow daily into the Mediterranean Sea raising the level of nitrates in water, up to six times above the WHO limits of 50 mg/l. This also contaminates the fish many Palestinians in Gaza depend on as the main food items.

Up to 95% of the water extracted from the Gaza coastal aquifer is unsuitable for human consumption due to over exploitation and wastewater contamination. Many families depend on tinkered water. Sadly this water, too, has been found to be severely contaminated by bacteria. According to UNRWA diarrhea and viral hepatitis are the major causes of morbidity in the refugee population of the Gaza Strip.

The worst damage to Palestinian water resources, to their farmland, and to the environment is caused by the armed to the teeth religiously extremists occupiers (settlers). Driven by their supremacist racist religion, and unhindered, but tacitly encouraged and protected, by the Israeli government and army, these Israeli fanatics illegally and forcefully occupy hill tops of Palestinian farm land, build their illegal colonies, and start attacking the neighboring Palestinian communities. Besides attacking Palestinian homes, torching their crops and animal barns, they confiscate water springs, poison

Palestinian water wells with chemicals, spoil them with dirty diapers, with their own feces or with dead chickens, and topple and shoot roof top water tanks.

Those fanatic colonizers are the largest per capita producers of wastewater in the West Bank, discharging large quantities of sewage directly into the environment, contaminating adjacent agricultural land and water streams. Randomly building their colonies on the hill tops without sewage and wastewater treatment facilities those extremist colonizers dump their wastewater and sewage down the hill towards Palestinian communities and farmland causing severe ecological damage and contamination to Palestinian agricultural food products thus spreading diseases.

As reported by the UN in March 2012, one other major threat to Palestinians arises from settlers seizing springs by force. The report states: “Palestinians have increasingly lost access to water sources in the West Bank as a result of the takeover of springs by Israeli settlers, who have used threats, intimidation and fences to ensure control of water points close to the settlements.”

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) examined 50 springs on Palestinian land close to Israeli settlements and found that: “In 22 of the water sources, Palestinians have been deterred from accessing the springs by acts of intimidation, threats and violence perpetrated by Israeli settlers, while in the eight springs under full settler control, Palestinian access has been prevented by physical obstacles, including the fencing of the spring area, and its ‘de facto annexation’ to the settlement.”

Israel is deliberately and arrogantly violating many international laws it is a state party of, notably the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the International Covenant on Civil And Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, The UN Convention on the Rights of Child (CRC), the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Fourth Geneva Convention and its Additional Protocol I protecting victims of armed conflicts and many of the Hague Regulations.

Israel's violation of all these international laws accompanied with its unethical policies and practices to deprive the whole Palestinian population of their access rights to the necessary clean water is considered a genocidal crime, a crime Israel (Jews) is very famous of.

“Israel's Water Genocide”, 19/05/2014, online at: <http://www.countercurrents.org/akleh190514.htm>

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❖ **Know Comment: Invest in and secure the Jordan Valley**

In his final speech to the Knesset in October 1995, two weeks before he was assassinated, prime minister Yitzhak Rabin presented his vision for a Palestinian “entity” that would be “less than a state.” Rabin made it clear that Israel would “not return to the June 4, 1967, lines,” and he pledged that Israel would retain control over the Jordan Valley “in the broadest meaning of that term.” He explicitly stated that Israel would not freeze building over the Green Line.

By contrast, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu today advocates the establishment of a Palestinian state; has largely frozen settlement building; and insists only upon “maintaining Israeli military forces along the Jordan River.” Netanyahu’s cautious formulation – Israeli forces along the Jordan River – means something other than full sovereignty, and clearly less than what Rabin intended.

Tellingly, Netanyahu has failed to promote the development of Jordan Valley settlements. I have learned that he has quietly hinted to prominent businessmen that they might not really want to invest in the development of Dead Sea north shore hotels.

Netanyahu’s government also has turned a blind eye to the seizure by Fatah figures Muhammad Dahlan and Jibril Rajoub of 500 hectares of land near Jericho for lucrative date tree plantations, nurtured with water stolen both from Mekorot national water company pipes and from Jericho’s residential drinking water lines.

All this tells me, worryingly, that Netanyahu is not committed to keeping the Jordan Valley under Israeli control. This is deeply regrettable, since the Israeli residents of that area are true pioneers, and only full control of the entire Jordan Valley region can provide Israel with security for the long-term.

On recent tours of the Jordan Valley Regional Council and Megilot Dead Sea Regional Council areas, organized by the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, I learned of the sacrifice and incredible agricultural productivity of the 6,000 residents and 27 settlements in these areas – most of which were established by the Labor Party. Regional council heads David Elhayani and Motzi Dehaman are heroic figures who have steered their communities through decades of disadvantage,

political neglect and security adversity.

I learned that the Jordan Valley is indispensable to Israel's national security, despite recent punditry that argues Israel no longer needs the valley as a shield against aggression from the east.

It's true that the conventional military threat to Israel from the east has diminished for now – with the end of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq, the weakening of war-torn Syria, and the impressive stability of Jordan despite the turmoil in the Arab world. Yet this is a very short-term perspective, motivated by the desire to convince the Israeli public that the Jordan Valley is militarily dispensable. This perspective ignores the immense potential for escalated political upheaval in the region, including possible jihadist destabilization of Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Jordan.

Maj.-Gen. (res.) Uzi Dayan, who was head of the IDF Central Command, IDF deputy chief of staff and national security adviser to the prime minister, has cogently and clearly laid out the argument for defensible borders that necessarily include the Jordan Valley.

Dayan says that Israeli security requires three things: fundamental strategic depth; room to wage war against conventional attack from the outside; and room that allows for combating terrorism.

The minimal strategic depth and indivisible air space required is the 65 kilometers average width of Israel from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River.

As for room to wage war, that is the Jordan Rift Valley, which ranges between 6- and 14-km. wide. The mountains on the valley's western edge (which range from 900- to 1,400-meters high) create a physical defensive barrier that is only traversable through five passes. Thus, even a small IDF unit deployed in a valley should be able defend Israel against an attack from the east.

Furthermore, the Jordan Valley is the eastern buffer zone that prevents the West Bank mountain region from becoming a full-blown terrorist entity.

Prof. Efraim Inbar, director of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, has argued for years that

if Israel wants to maintain a defensible border along the Jordan Valley, it needs to secure the main road from the coast to the valley, via an undivided Jerusalem and via the West Bank city of Ma'aleh Adumim. This is the only west-east axis with a Jewish majority, and the only safe route via which Israel can mobilize troops from the coast to the Jordan Valley in a case of military emergency.

Thus Ma'aleh Adumim is the linchpin in establishing an effective line of defense along the valley against aggression from the east. Bolstering the populated Jewish corridor from Jerusalem to Ma'aleh Adumim (including the 5-km. connecting strip of land known as E-1) is necessary to secure the road to the Jordan Valley and prevent the division of Jerusalem.

Some American and Israeli officials argue that Israel can achieve security on its eastern border by the placement of early detection systems in the Jordan Valley and by the deployment in the valley of foreign forces. That was the essence of the plan proposed by US Gen. John R. Allen on behalf of Secretary of State John Kerry.

Defense Minister Lt.-Gen. (res.) Moshe Ya'alon reportedly dismissed the plan out of hand, and Uzi Dayan concurs.

Dayan says experience proves that no warning system can replace the defensive space of the Jordan Valley, and that Israel must never rely on foreign forces. Foreign troops will not risk their lives in the war on terror, and they will be the first to flee the region should a crisis develop.

Dayan says that Israeli negotiators of the past 20 years have approached security and diplomacy with their heads screwed on backwards. We must move, he says, from a policy of "security based on international agreements and diplomatic guarantees," to a policy of "agreements based on security provided by Israeli forces deployed in defensible spaces." We have to think of defensible borders, he explains, not only as markers that ensure Israel's security needs, but as key building blocks that guarantee peace treaties will be sustainable.

Regional council head David Elhayani has a 10-year plan to triple the population in the Jordan Valley. He should receive full government backing. With the Kerry process dead-ended, Israel

should move to reinforce its presence in areas well within national consensus – such as the Jordan Valley and the E-1 corridor.

“Know Comment: Invest in and secure the Jordan Valley”, 15/05/2014, online at:

<http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Columnists/Know-Comment-Invest-in-and-secure-the-Jordan-Valley-352441>

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❖ **Police Bust Major Water Theft Ring in Hevron Area**

Police in Judea and Samaria have uncovered a major source of water theft by Arab water thieves in the Hevron Hills area.

Police in Judea and Samaria have uncovered a major source of water theft by Arab water thieves in the Hevron Hills area. Police announced Thursday that they had discovered a major water theft operation that was going on underground – some ten feet (3 meters) below the surface of the earth.

The theft entailed an illegal hookup to a water main owned by Mekorot, Israel's public water utility. The water was being pumped into a three-story building in the Hevron area. Inspectors saw a water pump, as well as a reserve pond and other storage facilities inside and around the building. Further investigation yielded discovery of the illegal hookup, far from where inspectors making a routine investigation would have thought to venture.

The owner of the building is being sought by police for questioning. Police are trying to determine if he or others were running a “reselling” business, stealing water and distributing it to customers. Yisrael Tal, Hevron District Police commander said that “the theft of water and the damage to infrastructure in the Hevron area is a major issue for us, and we deal with it with all urgency.”

Last week, the a 100-family Jewish community in nearby Bet Haggai was cut off from its water supply altogether. The Har Hevron Regional Council's spokesperson said that there have been more than 2,000 cases of water theft in the region – all by local Arabs – in the course of the last year.

“Police Bust Major Water Theft Ring in Hevron Area”, 15/05/2014, online at:

http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/180643#.U3sJtfl_uFU

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❖ **Tunnels Reveal Palestinian Water Theft in Hebron Hills**

Israel Police have unearthed a massive network of pirate water taps designed to steal water from the Mekorot National Water Carrier.

Last week, residents of the 100-family community of Bet Haggai, located in the South Hebron Hills, discovered that their faucets had run dry. That led to an investigation, which in turn led police to discover a 3 meter deep tunnel with a series of illegal water taps into local water mains.

Chevron District Police Commander Yisrael Tal told reporters Thursday that police view the issue of water theft “with all urgency,” but the issue of water theft in Judea and Samaria is not new. Judea and Samaria spokespeople have complained about Arab water theft for years, with at least 2,000 incidents in the South Hebron Hills area alone.

Not that the issue has reached the international community. In February, European Parliament President Martin Schulz asked the Knesset on February 12 “how can it be that an Israeli is allowed to use 70 litres of water per day, but a Palestinian only 17?”

And closer to home, left-wing groups like B’tselem claim that the Oslo Accords “discriminate” against the Palestinians by allotting 80 percent of Israel’s water resources to Israel over the Palestinians, despite the fact that Israelis comprise approximately 80 percent of the population between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

In response to Schulz’s question to the Knesset, Hebrew University Hydrology Professor Dr Haim Gvirtzman published a detailed report outlining wasteful Palestinian Authority water policies that are designed to maintain the illusion that Israel discriminates against Palestinians.

“The Palestinians refuse to develop their own significant underground water resources, build a seawater desalination plant, fix massive leakage from their municipal water pipes, build sewage treatment plants, irrigate land with treated sewage effluents or modern water-saving devices, or bill their own citizens for consumer water usage, leading to enormous waste,” Gvirtzman wrote in *The Truth Behind Palestinian Water Libels*. “At the same time, they drill illegally into Israel’s water resources, and send their sewage flowing into the valleys and streams of central Israel.

“In short, the Palestinian Authority is using water as a weapon against the State of Israel. It is not interested in practical solutions to solve the Palestinian people’s water shortages, but rather perpetuation of the shortages and the besmirching of Israel,” Gvirtzman reported on the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies website.

Furthermore, Gvirtzman says the Palestinian Authority has refused since its inception to build water treatment plants, despite their obligation to do so under the Oslo agreement. As in Jordan, Palestinian waste flows directly into local streams, polluting the environment and the aquifer and causing the spread of disease.

The international community, including the United States, is complicit in this last issue. Ariel University researchers have tried to raise money to fund water treatment facilities to serve the Israeli city of Ariel and the neighboring Palestinian community of Salfit. But their efforts have been blocked by the State Department, which will not allow USAID to participate in the tender, as well as by European governments and environmental foundations, who appear to hate the cursed Israeli “settlements” more than they “love” the environment.

“Tunnels Reveal Palestinian Water Theft in Hebron Hills”, 15/05/2014, online at:

<http://www.jewishpress.com/news/breaking-news/tunnels-reveal-palestinian-water-theft-in-hebron-hills/2014/05/15/>

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❖ Water in Gaza –what the analysts are saying

DUBAI, 12 May 2014 (IRIN) - A [dry winter](#) in the Middle East is being studied particularly closely in Gaza, where the area's 1.9 million residents already face a number of largely man-made threats to water security.

The following round-up of recent publications by think tanks, analysts and human rights organizations highlights the close link between water security and electricity supplies, and the near exhaustion of Gaza's coastal aquifer.

A power crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) has [reduced the availability of running](#) water in most households, according to a factsheet produced by the **UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)**, with more than 30 percent of homes in Gaza receiving running water for just 6-8 hours every four days.

In March, a petition signed by nearly 13,000 people and organised by the [Emergency Water and Sanitation-Hygiene Group \(EWASH\)](#), a coalition which includes national and international NGOs and UN agencies, was handed to the European Parliament to urge action to end the water crisis in Gaza.

“The scale and severity of the water crisis facing the Gaza Strip is enormous, and unless immediate action is taken, the damage to Gaza's natural water resources will be irreversible,” says a factsheet produced by the [Palestinian Water Authority \(PWA\)](#).

At least 90 percent of the water supply in Gaza is contaminated with a combination of nitrate (NO₃) or chloride (Cl), according to PWA, which says water quantity is also an issue, with average consumption of 90 litres per person per day, below recommended [guidelines](#) for minimum health requirements say EWASH.

In the coming years, the population of Gaza is expected to continue growing, creating increased

water and power needs. The power supply required to operate current water and wastewater facilities (29 megawatts) is expected to rise to 81.5 MW by 2020, according to PWA, as the population grows and new water projects are built.

“The insufficient supply of electricity and fuel to operate water pumps and wells has caused a further reduction in the availability of running water in most households. This has increased people’s reliance on private, uncontrolled water suppliers and lowered hygiene standards,” reads OCHA OPT’s March factsheet.

Israel is the main source of electricity in OPT, with [4,702 gigawatt hours](#) purchased from Israel in 2012, constituting 89 percent of its total energy purchases. The Gaza Strip, specifically, is supplied with electricity from three sources: purchases from Israel (120 megawatts) and from Egypt (28 MW) and production by the Gaza Power Plant (GPP) (currently 60 MW). According to OCHA, this supply meets less than half of the estimated demand.

In a recent report on water in OPT, [Friends of the Earth](#) says: “Water injustice and inequitable allocation of water to Palestinian people has seriously deteriorated the overall economic and social well-being of the people... The majority of water resources are concentrated in the hands of Israel, while the Palestinian population endures significant water deficits.”

In a [press release](#) issued in February, the Israeli human rights organization **B’Tselem** said the Israeli government was largely responsible for this discrimination due its water policy: “Minimal amounts of water are supplied to Palestinians and water from shared resources is unequally divided.”

The **Israel Water Authority** on the other hand [says](#) Israel goes well beyond existing water obligations in providing additional water supplies to OPT. It says uncontrolled drilling in OPT is a major threat to supply: “Over 300 unauthorized wells were drilled by the Palestinians in the West Bank. These unauthorized wells may ruin the shared aquifer as they almost completely ruined the one in Gaza and caused an ecological disaster.”

Almost all the water in Gaza comes from the coastal aquifer, which is shared with Israel. “[D]ue to the absence of any policy coordination between Israel and the Gaza Strip with regard to the Coastal Aquifer, both authorities are currently over-extracting,” [says EWASH](#).

A **UN report** in August 2012 entitled [Gaza in 2020](#) forecast that at current rates of deterioration the coastal aquifer will become unusable by 2016 and beyond repair by 2020.

In 2009 the UN Environment Programme recommended ending abstraction from the aquifer completely, but with low rainfall and no year-round rivers, Gaza has few other options.

PWA has long-term plans for a central desalination plant and short-term plans for several low-volume desalination projects, wastewater treatment plants and developing treated wastewater reuse for irrigation. But given the challenges posed by the blockade and electricity shortages, the viability of such plans is in question.

While large-scale emergency and strategic water desalination and wastewater treatment projects are necessary to provide for the population in the future, without adequate power sources, these projects will only add to the challenges.

As part of its [2014 response plan](#) for OPT, the UN has appealed for US\$25 million to help improve access to basic water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services for 1.9 million of the people in need. So far, the chronically underfunded WASH sector is just [5.6 percent funded](#), well below the average of 18 percent for other clusters.

“Water in Gaza –what the analysts are saying”, 12/05/2014, online at: <http://www.irinnews.org/report/100075/water-in-gaza-what-the-analysts-are-saying>

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❖ In Pictures: Gaza water crisis worsens

The 1.7 million Palestinian residents of the Gaza Strip are facing a growing water shortage.

Currently, 90 percent of Gaza's main water supply is unfit for drinking, and unsuitable even for agricultural use. The besieged territory's main water supply, the coastal aquifer, is over-pumped, and a crippling Egyptian-Israeli blockade on Gaza has exacerbated the problem.

While water treatment plants exist in Gaza, they are under-developed, and frequent fuel shortages force them to regularly halt operations. As a result, local authorities are now pumping 90 million cubic litres of partially-treated sewage into the Mediterranean sea off the Gaza coast on daily basis.

The untreated sewage has infiltrated Gaza's groundwater, contaminating the water supply, which now contains high chloride and nitrate levels. The Palestinian Ministry of Health has urged Palestinians in Gaza to boil water before they drink it or use it for cooking. An estimated 26 percent of diseases in Gaza are water related.

The water salinity has affected the types of food grown in Gaza, eliminating most citrus fruit, which are sensitive to saline, in favour of more salt-tolerant vegetables and flowers, like cabbage, spinach, green beans, cucumber and tomatoes.

The quantity of water accessible to Palestinians in Gaza is less than one-third the consumption levels of an Israeli citizen, and far below minimum standards recommended by the World Health Organization. A recent United Nations report showed that if the current situation persists, the coastal aquifer could become unusable as early as 2016, and the damage could become irreversible by 2020.

"In Pictures: Gaza water crisis worsens", 12/05/2014, online at:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/inpictures/2014/03/pictures-gaza-water-crisis-wors-201432673053211982.html>

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❖ **A future of thirst: Water crisis lies on the horizon**

PARIS: The next time your throat is as dry as a bone and the Sun is beating down, take a glass of clean, cool water.

Savour it. Sip by sip. Vital and appreciated as that water is, it will be even more precious to those who will follow you.

By the end of this century, billions are likely to be gripped by water stress and the stuff of life could be an unseen driver of conflict.

So say hydrologists who forecast that on present trends, freshwater faces a double crunch — from a population explosion, which will drive up demand for food and energy, and the impact of climate change.

"Approximately 80 per cent of the world's population already suffers serious threats to its water security, as measured by indicators including water availability, water demand and pollution," the Nobel-winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warned in a landmark report in March.

"Climate change can alter the availability of water and therefore threaten water security."

Already today, around 768 million people do not have access to a safe, reliable source of water and 2.5 billion do not have decent sanitation. Around a fifth of the world's aquifers are depleted.

Jump forward in your imagination to mid-century, when the world's population of about 7.2 billion is expected to swell to around 9.6 billion.

By then, global demand for water is likely to increase by a whopping 55 per cent, according to the United Nations' newly published World Water Development Report.

More than 40 per cent of the planet's population will be living in areas of "severe" water stress, many of them in the broad swathe of land that runs along north Africa, the Middle East and western South Asia.

Yet these scenarios do not take into account changes in rainfall or snowfall or glacier shrinkage caused by global warming.

As a very general rule, wet countries will get wetter and dry countries will get drier, accentuating risk of flood or drought, climate scientists warn.

But whether people will heed their alarm call is a good question. "When seismologists talk about an area at risk from an earthquake, people generally accept what they say and refrain from building their home there," says French climatologist Herve Le Treut.

"But when it comes to drought or flood, people tend to pay less attention when the warning comes from meteorologists."

Water squabbles in the hot, arid sub-tropics have a long history. In recent years, the Tigris, Euphrates and Nile have all been the grounds for verbal sparring over who has the right to build dams, withhold or extract "blue gold" to the possible detriment of people downstream.

"There will clearly be less water available in sub-tropical countries, both as surface water and aquifer water, and this will sharpen competition for water resources," says Blanca Jimenez-Cisneros, who headed the chapter on water for the big IPCC report.

Citing a 2012 assessment by US intelligence agencies, the US State Department says: "Water is not just a human health issue, not just an economic development or environmental issue, but a peace and security issue."

Rows over water between nations tend to be resolved without bloodshed, often using international fora, says Richard Connor, who headed the UN water report.

However, "you can talk about conflict in which water is the root cause, albeit usually hidden," he told AFP.

"It can lead to fluctuations in energy and food prices, which can in turn lead to civil unrest. In such cases, the 'conflict' may be over energy or food prices, but these are themselves related to water availability and allocation."

Failing a slowdown in population growth or a swift solution to global warming, the main answers for addressing the water crunch lie in efficiency.

In some countries of the Middle East, between 15 and 60 per cent of water disappears through leaks or evaporation even before the consumer turns the tap.

Building desalination plants on coasts in dry regions may sound tempting, "but their water can cost up to 30 times more than ordinary water," notes Jimenez-Cisneros.

Efficiency options include smarter irrigation, crops that are less thirsty or drought-resilient, power stations that do not extract vast amounts of water for cooling, and consumer participation, such as flushing toilets with "grey" water, meaning used bath or shower water.

"A future of thirst: Water crisis lies on the horizon", 13/05/2014, online at:
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/environment/the-good-earth/A-future-of-thirst-Water-crisis-lies-on-the-horizon/articleshow/35077138.cms>

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❖ Hebron suffers landfill and water shortage, aggravated by Israel

HEBRON (Ma'an) -- Like many cities in the region, the southern West Bank city of Hebron faces a shortage of space for waste disposal. Unlike most cities, however, Hebron's problems are exacerbated by gun-toting Israeli settlers who forcibly access the area's main landfill.

Mayor Dawood Zaatari told Ma'an on Sunday that the al-Minya landfill, which was built with World Bank funds specifically to serve the 800,000 Palestinian residents of the Bethlehem and Hebron regions, is still being used by Israeli settlers who dump their waste "at gunpoint."

"We could take the case to international courts in order to stop settlers from using the dump," al-Zaatari added, stressing that "settlements are illegal and we don't recognize them."

Al-Zaatari, who chairs the Joint Service Council for Solid Waste Management of Bethlehem and Hebron, added that the council contacted several international organizations and donor countries in attempt to stop settlers' violations. "A legal committee is studying the case and we could end up filing a complaint against settlers," he added.

The al-Minya landfill is the first modern waste landfill in the southern West Bank, and was intended to dispose of 34 percent of the entire West Bank's total needs.

Hebron has also been suffering from a serious water shortage that is expected to take a few years in order to be fixed, the mayor told Ma'an.

Asked about the water crisis in Hebron and the municipality's preparations for the upcoming summer, the mayor said that all West Bank districts face water crises in summer. The problem, he said, is mainly political as Israel maintains control on water resources in the West Bank.

Hebron municipality is about to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Palestinian water authority to implement a wastewater desalination facility which will provide initially 12,000 cubic meters of water for agricultural and industrial use every day.

Hebron city needs 40,000 cubic meters of water every day. The Palestinian water authority, however, can provide only 25,000 cubic meters, according to mayor al-Zaatari, due to Israeli control over West Bank water resources.

Responding to a question about claims of maldistribution of water, the mayor said: "Water distribution is controlled electronically and we make sure that water is distributed equally to all citizens."

He added, however, that hospitals, medical centers and civil society organizations and the old city of Hebron are given priority because they deal with humanitarian issues.

"Hebron suffers landfill and water shortage, aggravated by Israel", 11/05/2014, online at:
<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=696499>

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❖ **Christian Kurdy appointed managing director, NSF Middle East**

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — NSF International, a global independent public health organization that writes standards, and tests and certifies products for the water, food, health sciences and consumer goods industries, has appointed Christian Kurdy as managing director, NSF Middle East, based in Abu Dhabi, UAE, according to a press release.

NSF International has been active in the Middle East for more than 25 years, working with more than 1,000 companies in the region, noted the release.

Kurdy will help guide the growth of the NSF’s operations throughout the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries (or region) by providing consulting, testing, auditing and certification services for the water, food and beverage industries as well as quality (QMS) and environmental management systems (EMS) registrations, the release reported.

According to the release, NSF also helps companies operating in the real estate and construction, pharmaceutical manufacturing, energy (natural gas, oil and petroleum), transportation and mining sectors demonstrate compliance with global and local regulations.

“Through Christian Kurdy’s leadership, we believe NSF’s Middle East operations will continue to grow, providing our customers with the services needed to meet regulatory and public health requirements and expand into new international export markets,” said Kevan P. Lawlor, president and CEO of NSF International. “Industry leaders and government agencies continue to rely on the NSF Middle East team for their expertise in water, food and beverage quality as well as quality and environmental management systems registrations.”

“Christian Kurdy appointed managing director, NSF Middle East”, 16/05/2014, online at:
<http://www.watertechonline.com/articles/168173-christian-kurdy-appointed-managing-director-nsf-middle-east>

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❖ **Is your food and water contaminated?**

Bactusense from Israel will give real-time identification and analysis of bacteria in food processing plants, water systems, hospitals and more.

What if one product could detect bacteria in food-processing plants, hospitals and municipal water supplies — inexpensively and in real time?

Thanks to Israeli nanotechnology, that product is on the horizon and has the potential to save millions of lives lost to bacterial contamination every year.

The Bactusense optical biosensor, still in development, uses silicon-based microchips to trap bacteria from any liquid – such as water, milk or blood — flowing through the system. The optical scanner then identifies the trapped microbes.

Bactusense’s technology was invented by Prof. Amir Saar of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Prof. Ester Segal of the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology. The IP was licensed in May to Capitalnano, Israel’s leading investor and founder of startup companies based on nanotechnologies coming out of Israeli universities.

Capitalnano Managing Partner Ofer Du-nour says the system could be configured in different versions to identify specific kinds of bacteria in water, food, air, soil and body fluid samples. Each chip in the system will cost less than \$1 to manufacture, while the cost of the entire optical setup is estimated to be around \$10,000 depending on its intended use.

“It can be used as a continuous monitor for water systems or for food processing,” Du-nour tells ISRAEL21c. “Or it can be used on an as-needed basis for analyzing blood or urine samples of patients being admitted to hospitals. Basically it’s the same core system with slight variations. There would be an add-on for water systems to provide remote sensing, so it can be in the field without any need for a person to operate it.”

Lots of potential customers

Access to clean water has become one of the major challenges on the planet. It's estimated that more than 780 million people worldwide can't find clean drinking water, and that 3.4 million people die each year from diseases related to contaminated water.

The picture is nearly as grim in regard to processed foods. In the United States alone, bacterial contamination developed during food processing causes 3,000 deaths and 48 million non-fatal illnesses each year.

And in hospitals, where bacterial infections are a constant concern, current technology takes two or three days to positively identify the presence of bacteria and its type. In the meantime, the patient is not receiving treatment – or possibly getting the wrong treatment — putting all surrounding patients and staff members in danger and encouraging the growth of resistant “superbugs.”

Bactusense is not the first Israeli technology to attempt to address the lag in identifying hospital-borne infections. Real-time solutions on the drawing board include a [bedside kit](#) and an automated DNA analysis of PCR (polymerase chain reaction) tests, the most popular molecular [diagnostic technique](#)

However, nothing quite like Bactusense exists in the market, the company claims.

“We saw several attempts to do what we do, and it comes down to the sensitivity of the system and its ability to distinguish between live and dead bacteria,” says Du-nour. “This is important in the food industry, because after you've cleaned the machinery you still have dead bacteria present and you don't want to count them.”

In addition, “it's not enough to know you have bacteria; you have to know which one. Usually you're looking for a specific type, and we'll have chips to find those and ignore the other types.”

No surprises in your processed food

Du-nour predicts that Bactusense will be commercialized within two or three years. “I believe the first target would be the food industry,” he says.

The cost of bacterial contamination for the food industry is huge, especially when you factor in the costs of widespread recalls and public-relations damage. So it's not surprising that several potential

customers from this sector have already expressed keen interest in getting a prototype of the Bactusense system installed their factories ASAP.

“The basis of Capitalnano is that we think there is a huge potential for technologies in universities, especially in the area of nanotech, and we look for those we think are the best, for which we think the investment of time and money is not that large,” says Du-nour.

“We license technologies that are pretty close to being mature and we build startup companies around them. We always aim for things that are not only wise in a business sense but have some value for helping humanity.”

Capitalnano was founded in 2012 by entrepreneur and investor Nir Davison, and its advisory board includes Prof. Chezi Barenholtz and [Prof. Shlomo Magdassi](#) of the Hebrew University, Prof. Arie Zaban of Bar-Ilan University, Prof. Rafi Semiat of the Technion, Prof. Alexander Blankstein of Tel-Aviv University and Yaron Kniajer of the Rhodium investment fund.

“Is your food and water contaminated?”, 19/05/2014, online at: <http://israel21c.org/environment/is-your-food-and-water-contaminated/>

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❖ **Thirsty Energy or Hungry Water?**

The World Bank chose “Thirsty Energy” as title for its report on the energy-water nexus. If we were to produce such a report for the Arab region, the title could better be “Hungry Water”- as production of water eats the bulk of Arab energy.

In no other part of the world is the link between energy and water as critical as it is in the Arab region. While it is one of the driest areas on earth, the Arab region holds the bulk of the world’s oil reserves. The energy sector plays a major role in meeting water and food needs in Arab countries, mainly through seawater desalination, in a region which hosts 50% of the world’s desalination capacity. Water is also heavily needed to generate energy, in all its types; from fossil fuels to solar PV and Concentrated Solar Power (CSP) to nuclear energy.

Climate change will only worsen the water situation, according to a report produced by the Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED) on Impact of Climate Change on Arab Countries. By the end of the 21st century, Arab countries are predicted to experience an alarming 25% decrease in precipitation and 25% increase in evaporation rates.

Desalination, water distribution, and pumping groundwater consume 50% of total energy in some Arab countries. Irrigation efficiency is among the world’s lowest, while per capita domestic water consumption in some of the most water-scarce Arab countries is among the world’s highest. Half of the wastewater produced is discharged without treatment, while only 20% of the treated water is reused.

A 2013 AFED report on Sustainable Energy concluded that Arab energy is not managed better than water. Although energy intensity and per capita carbon emissions are among the highest in the world, over 50 million Arab people are without access to modern energy services. Growth in energy consumption, at 8%, has been twice the growth in GDP, at 4%. Average energy efficiency in the region stands at less than 50%. A combination of water and energy efficiency measures can save up to half of the energy currently used, while maintaining the same production levels.

Experience has shown that free water and energy are wasted resources. Artificially low prices and heavy subsidies are at the root of inefficiency, overuse, excessive pollution and environmental

degradation in the Arab region. For example, the average price charged for water in the Arab region is about 35% of the cost of production, and in the case of desalinated water it is only 10%. Unrestrained energy and water subsidies, reaching 95% in many cases, are the main obstacle to achieving real results in this regard. This practice only promotes waste, and does not help to ease the burden on the poor, as over 90% of the uncontrolled subsidies go to the rich. It is futile to deplete strategic reserves of fossil groundwater, to grow fodder in the desert supporting the production of dairy products for export, while desalinating water to irrigate urban gardens.

Proper management of water and energy supplies requires the introduction of pricing schemes which meet the goals of local acceptability, economic efficiency, cost recovery and equity.

A recent Chatham House report estimated that if consumption levels of water and electricity in the oil exporting GCC countries continue to rise at the same rates, demand would double by 2024. This means more groundwater depletion and growing use of energy for desalination. If no remedial measures are taken, most of the fuel produced will consequently have to be used locally, thus depriving these countries of major export revenues.

Various schemes currently being planned and executed will likely further strain water resources. Some countries (UAE, Jordan) are pursuing nuclear energy, requiring water resources. Other countries, such as Qatar, have ambitious plans to meet food security by cultivating thousands of hectares mainly with desalinated seawater.

This brings us to the root of the problem, which is resource management. A report on Ecological Footprint produced by AFED has found that demand for life supporting goods and services in the Arab countries is twice as much as the potential renewable resources their ecosystems can provide. This imbalance is a threat to future growth opportunities and quality of life.

Pursuing national development strategies is naturally a main priority for Arab countries, but economic growth must take into account ecological limits and the capacity of nature to sustainably support life. Growth targets should respect the regenerative limits of nature.

Given the relative low efficiency with which resources are turned into final products, Arab countries must improve their resource productivity by prioritizing energy and water efficiency. Decision

makers will need to look beyond GDP as the sole measure of performance, and seek to complement traditional economic analysis with data on resource consumption and availability.

The good news is that serious work has started to stand up to the challenge. Arab ministers of electricity have adopted a comprehensive energy efficiency framework. Abu Dhabi's water strategy was the latest plan to be announced in the region to manage water resources. Saudi Arabia has embarked on an aggressive energy efficiency program. Renewable energy is rapidly expanding: Saudi Arabia plans to meet 33% of its local energy needs from renewables by 2032. Abu Dhabi has built Shams-1, a CSP plant with 100 megawatt capacity. Renewable energy projects worth \$11 billion are underway in Morocco, with the aim to build 9 gigawatts capacity.

Ultimately, wide-spread reforms in the energy and water sectors require serious institutional and policy measures. Overconsumption cannot be checked, efficiency measures cannot be adequately implemented, and renewable energy cannot spread out if current subsidy regimes are not phased out. Private sector participation in the energy and water sectors requires that policy makers establish the appropriate enablers, including well-defined policies and sound regulatory frameworks.

Arab countries, both oil exporters and importers, are well endowed with renewable sources of energy, primarily solar. For now, these are underutilized. Together with enhanced energy efficiency and cleaner technologies, these renewable sources can help diversify and power a more sustainable future.

"Thirsty Energy or Hungry Water?" , AFED, 15/05/2014, online at:

<http://mideastenvironment.apps01.yorku.ca/2014/05/thirsty-energy-or-hungry-water-afed/>

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❖ **Official: Saudi Arabia needs to spend \$213bn on water, power**

The blueprint of a project to link Saudi Arabia and Egypt with an electric power grid is in its final stages and the project may be offered for bidding by early next year, an official has said, as the kingdom's investment in power and water is expected to rise to SR800 billion (\$213.3 billion) over the next 10 years.

"The electricity link between the two countries may be realized in the next three years after the start of the execution work," said Saleh Al-Awaji, Saudi Arabia's Undersecretary of the Ministry of Water and Electricity.

Al-Awaji was talking to the media after opening the "Electricity and Energy Exhibition" here on Tuesday. The exhibition, jointly organized by the Dhahran International Exhibitions Company and the Saudi National Electricity Company, will end on Thursday.

"The project to link the two countries with electric grid has been based on thorough studies," he said.

Al-Awaji said the peak of the need for power in the Kingdom is usually between 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. while in Egypt it is between 6-10 p.m. "Therefore the Kingdom can import electricity from Egypt during the day time and re-export it in the evening," he said.

The official also said the need for power in the Kingdom drops in winter while in Egypt it maintains the same levels throughout the year. "Hence there is an opportunity for the Kingdom to export electricity to Egypt in winter," he added.

Al-Awaji noted that the Kingdom has electric links with the Gulf Cooperation Council countries while Egypt is linked with eight eastern Arab countries. "The two groups can benefit from the grid link between the Kingdom and Egypt thus creating an active market to exchange energy between the countries of the region," the official said.

Al-Awaji said the sector of water and electricity in the Kingdom is growing fast and added that investment in this sector may rise to more than SR800 billion during the next 10 years.

“The contribution of the private sector in these investments may be more than 30 percent. Investors will, therefore, have ample opportunities for investments,” he said.

Al-Awaji revealed that studies were currently being conducted to establish four new power generating companies. “The studies are also considering the participation of the local and foreign private sector in the ownership of these companies,” he added.

He said the government is very serious in its endeavor to exploit the renewable and the nuclear energy. “A team of specialists is currently working out the modalities of this move under the umbrella of King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy,” he said.

The undersecretary assured all subscribers that there would be no power cuts this summer. “We are well prepared for the summer season,” he said asking people to rationalize their water and electricity consumption.

“Official: Saudi Arabia needs to spend \$213bn on water, power”, Al Arabiya, 15/05/2014, online at:

<http://mideastenvironment.apps01.yorku.ca/2014/05/official-saudi-arabia-needs-to-spend-213bn-on-water-power-al-arabiya/>

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❖ Misplaced Opposition To The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam

The 1929 Nile water allocation agreement that was signed by Egypt and the United Kingdom (which excluded Ethiopia and nearly all other upper basin countries) allocated 48 billion (65%) cubic meters of water per year to Egypt and 4 billion to the Sudan. The 1959 agreement between Egypt and the Sudan raised the share to 55.5 (75%) billion and 18.5 billion cubic meters to Egypt and the Sudan, respectively. This agreement also excluded all the other upper Nile riparian nations. Egypt wants to keep the colonial-era agreements and the 1959 accord. This unfair allocation of the Nile water enabled Egypt to construct the Aswan Dam and the two countries never cared to consult the upper riparian nations. As argued by Badr Abdelatty, a spokesman for Egypt's Foreign Ministry [1], Egypt wants to keep the status quo because it needs all the "assigned 55 billion cubic meters a year for vital use such as drinking, washing and sanitation needs" by 2020. This clearly indicates Egypt's desire to secure its own Nile water-related benefits intact while at the same time denying other (Sub-Saharan) Nile riparian countries from using their own waters for alleviating poverty and enhancing sustainable development. Contrary to the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) that was formalized in 1999 [2] that Egypt was a party to, it is now saying that any change to the colonial era agreement would be tantamount to affecting its strategic interests and repeatedly threatens to use all means available if Ethiopia continues to build the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). Egypt continues to escalate the confrontation despite Ethiopia's claim that the dam would have no appreciable negative impact on Egypt. Ethiopia, along with the other upper Nile riparian countries object to the privileges that Egypt gave itself and consider Egyptian monopoly over the Nile waters as a violation of their sovereignty. In accordance to the 2010 Entebbe Agreement by the upstream countries (which included Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania, and now effectively Sudan and South Sudan), Ethiopia, therefore, insists on adhering to its plan and is forging ahead on constructing the dam.

In what follows, we use an amalgam of economics, history, law, security and environment factors to examine the Egyptian opposition to the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). We try to triangulate these factors hoping to contribute to the debate and gain insight into the current tension between Egypt and Ethiopia. We attempt to make a dispassionate analysis of the water sharing problem between upstream and downstream countries. Consistent with theory and real life cases, we surmise that water has been and continues to be the cause of conflict in a number of regions in the world [3] and, unfortunately, water wars tend to be irrational, unsustainable and

economically and socially destructive. Trans-boundary water sharing and pollution (environmental-ecological) problems are never resolved through hegemonies, militarism and ultra-nationalism.

Dissenting voices against mega projects such as GERD are not new[4] – the criticisms ranging from cost and scheduling overruns (as a recent study by Ansar, Flyvbjerg, Budzier and Lunn of Oxford University shows [5]), to their impacts on population dislocation, corruption, transparency in awarding of contracts, the manner in which such projects are financed, social and environmental impacts in upstream and downstream countries and water security concerns. Hence, Ethiopians may legitimately ask questions and raise concerns about the manner in which the Government of Ethiopia is handling the project. In this article, however, we focus on trans-boundary environmental problems, the fair use of the Nile water and address Egyptian concerns. This is important because the construction of GERD has reignited the long standing explosive issue of the equitable use of Nile waters. We also believe the recent (counterproductive) Egyptian threats of war and various forms of diplomatic offensives require the attentions of scholars of substance and policy makers.

Egyptian worries and aspirations over the Nile River system however is historical and go back to the days before the formation of the Egyptian nation/state even though the issue began to dominate the country's political landscape with the generation of militarism and ultra-nationalism (from Gamal Abel Nasser to the late President Sadat's 1979 threat of war and to the current leaders of Egypt vowing not to lose a "drop of water)."[6] The recent political instability in Egypt must have made the trans-boundary water sharing problem a point of political opportunism. Reports indicate that Egypt may indeed be laying the ground work to "destroy the dam before Ethiopia starts filling it with water or risk flooding Sudan's flat eastern territories upon its destruction."[7] A WikiLeaks report is also known to have revealed that Egypt, in collaboration with Sudan, had plans "to build an airstrip for bombing a dam in the Blue Nile River Gorge in Ethiopia."[8] In its June 2013 analysis of Egypt's military options, Straighter, a global intelligence organization, indicated that the country does have military options against Ethiopia's dam, but noted that distance will heavily constrain Egypt's ability to demolish the work. The options, however, may include air attack from bases in the Sudan, Djibouti and Eritrea[9] and/or sponsoring present day local "militants" to frustrate the construction of the dam. Obviously, Ethiopia is aware of the Egyptian options and its age-old aspiration to control the sources of the Nile River system. For example, on April 17, 2014, amid reports that Egypt was trying to woo

South Sudan towards its dispute over Nile waters[10], the Voice of America reported that the President of South Sudan assured the Ethiopian authorities that the recently signed military and economic cooperation between Egypt and South Sudan would not allow Egypt to attack Ethiopia or allow subversive activities.

Egypt's policy towards upstream countries is primarily driven by its interest on the water which aims at thriving at the misery of downstream countries, apparently without any form of substantive reciprocity. In contrast to the present day relationship between Egypt and Ethiopia, their ancestors, despite their limited knowledge of geography and hydrology, had a better understanding of the economics of water sharing. As the renowned historian Richard Pankhurst documented, the Turkish Sultan who ruled Egypt before the British, had "paid the ruler of Ethiopia an annual tax of 50,000 gold coins" lest the latter diverts the Nile.[11] Nowadays, and not surprisingly, even the Egyptian Minister of Antiquities is against the GERD.[12] In fact, institutional memories and abundant documents of the last sixty years indicate not only just the inconsistency, but also an immense level of damage that Egyptian foreign policy has done to Ethiopia and the Sudan. Egyptian interference in the two countries' internal affairs has been largely driven by the Ethiopian and the Sudanese[13] use of the Nile waters. For instance, Egypt objected to the independence movement in South Sudan but promoted the separation of Eritrea and the creation of one of the most densely populated landlocked countries in the world. The international community is not unaware of these facts but Egypt's strategic location and its pivotal role in the politics of the Middle East did not allow the powers-to-be to call a spade a spade. As of late, intergovernmental organizations like the African Union which were once mute about the behaviors of successive military rulers of Egypt, who often controlled political and economic power under the cover of phony elections and revolutions, have started to recognize the problems of the Nile River system. Ethiopia's and the other upstream riparian countries' rights to equitably share the waters of Nile is now an African agenda though key members of the Arab League continue to support the position taken by Egypt.[14]

Ethiopia's right to use the water that originates within itself would have included (and, in our view, should include), in addition to power-generating purposes, irrigation, water recreation and navigational services, flood control as well as water storage and supply. It is obvious, therefore, that dams provide valuable economic benefits. Just like any mega project, dams also involve several side-

effects, which could be summarized as environmental and ecological, social (forced relocation of locals), economic and even political. Other concerns may include evaluating and managing the risks associated with dam construction as well as asking questions whether the product (GERD in our case) would provide the desired and needed benefits to stakeholders such as access to electricity. A reasonable framework of concern about dam construction, therefore, would include a thorough benefit-cost analysis, not just one-sided focus on the costs. This is our major concern in regards to environmentalists and some of their Ethiopian supporters who campaign against the 6000 MW dam.

The environmentalists refer to the GERD as a “white elephant,”[15] despite the fact that the project’s leaked document, alleged to be prepared by International Panel of Experts (IPE), showing favorable financial and social benefits to Ethiopia and the Sudan. Environmentalists such as the International Rivers Network (IRN)[16] need to, therefore, quantify the magnitude of the side effects of the project and should not rely on “covert” and “secondary” data. More importantly, rather than being the butterflies of potential conflict in the Eastern Nile region, they need to: (i) acknowledge Ethiopia’s sovereign rights to use its own resources in accordance to international law and without hurting downstream countries; (ii) identify mitigation strategies so that genuine concerns are addressed before the construction is finalized; and (iii) propose how the mitigation strategies are going to be financed. In April 2014, the California based environmental pressure group which is against any form of large dam that is proposed to be built in Africa and Asia leaked the 48 pages long confidential document that was prepared by International Panel of Experts (IPE) on Ethiopian Grand Renaissance Dam.[17] Now that the confidential report is in the public domain, it allows everyone to put to test the concerns of both the friends and foes of the GERD.

The key features of the IPE’s report could be summarized as follows:- (i) unlike the options of smaller dams which would have included potential irrigation projects, GERD is an energy production project and any fear of large and permanent reduction in the flow of freshwater to downstream countries is unfounded; (ii) the filling up of the dam is planned, to be done in stages by taking into account rainfall patterns and the catchment area; (iii) both the financial and social cost-benefit preliminary analysis of the project on upstream and downstream countries are favorable and the expected damages on downstream countries are not insurmountable; (iv) the preliminary findings about the project’s side effects on Egypt is not sufficient and hence there is an information

(hydrological) void, and much of the current allegations and threats are based on unfounded Egyptian fears; (v) work has progressed to the extent that, at the time of writing this article, the project has reached a degree of completion rate of 31% and the water diversion has been successfully carried out; (vi) the expected loss of water due to evaporation for the new project is not worse than what Egypt is currently losing from its environmentally unfriendly projects and poor water management; [18] (vii) recent geological and hydrological studies have documented an abundant level of ground water in the Nile basin countries[19] and hence downstream countries will not be thirsty if upstream countries build dams that generate electricity. It is clear, therefore, that Egypt's no dam policy or stance against large energy producing dams in upstream countries is a misplaced opposition and therefore calls for a new thinking in Cairo.

As Professor Aaron Wolf of Oregon State University observes, there are about 261 trans-boundary rivers across the world and unless carefully handled a significant proportion of these rivers could be causes of conflict. Wolf documented that water has been the cause of political tensions between a number of countries, including but not limited to Arabs and Israelis; Indians and Bangladeshis; Americans and Mexicans, the Chinese and other downstream countries, Brazilians and Paraguayans and all the ten riparian states of the Nile River system. He observes that “war over water seems neither strategically rational, nor hydrographically effective nor economically viable.”[20] In other words, there is little reason for a “water war” between Egypt and Ethiopia. The two countries can also learn from inter-basin development projects that are successful, such as the Colorado River Basin allocation between the US riparian states and Mexico, the Columbia River Agreement between the US and Canada and the numerous European collaborative projects and integrated river basin managements of the River Rhine. In particular, Egypt and Ethiopia could learn a lot from South Africa paying[21] Lesotho to quench its increasing thirst from the Lesotho Highlands Waters Project. The framework for exploiting the Niger River Basin, the Zambezi River basin and the Nile Basin Initiative[22] itself could serve as useful points of departure for cooperation.

Notwithstanding the above, Egyptian politicians often argue about “historical rights” and connect the water issue with the civilizations of the antiquities on the Nile delta and forget about the history of the formation of nations and states. Evidently this stance is self-serving in that it ignores historical tensions between black people in the region (present day Sudan, South Sudan, Niger, Eritrea and

Ethiopia, among others) and the race controversy in the African origin of humanity and the history of the Nile Valley (see for example Martin Bernal's Black Athena, 1987; Anta Diop[23], among others). The politics of the Nile River system thus has an Africa-Arab dimension and hence sensitive to Pan Africanist and Pan Arabist agendas. Hence, if a conflict between Egypt and Ethiopia erupts, it is more than likely to have spillover effects on the rest of Africa.

Like most of the post colony states of Africa, modern and independent Egypt was created out of the ashes of colonialism (see for example Achille Mbembe and Samir Amin, among others). Britain's colonial interest on the Nile dam at Lake Tana (main source of Abay/Blue Nile) is the foundation of Egypt's historical and legal claims to the water. Britain's interest however was primarily driven by its desire to irrigate its large cotton plantations in the Anglo Egyptian colony of the Sudan and supply its factories which were located in the United Kingdom. Modern day cotton plantations in Egypt are entirely dependent on the soil that gets exported by the river primarily from Ethiopian highlands. In a series of short articles, Dr. Yosef Yacob[24] documented the history of colonialism in the region and indicated how Emperor Menelik (1844-1913) and Emperor Haile Selassie (1892-1975) managed to escape Britain's colonial ambitions over the Ethiopian highlands. He also revealed how Emperor Haile Selassie was visionary in that he successfully resisted Britain's encroachments on Lake Tana by hiring an American engineering company to construct the dam and trying to finance the project through the issuance of debt securities in the United States. In other words, had the Emperor's wishes been realized, the GERD would have been built a long time ago. We have yet to see any reasonable criticism of Dr. Yosef Yacob's treatise by those who oppose the construction of the dam.

The next leg of the Egyptian opposition is international law. Here too the argument collapses before it faces the scrutiny of legal scholars. Egyptian officials often refer to the 1929 colonial era agreement and the 1959 agreement signed between Egypt and the Sudan (both former British colonies) that Ethiopia was not party to and had never consented to. First, it is important to note that colonial treaties have no direct relevance for resolving Africa's contemporary problems. The Nile basin countries have already rejected it. Thus, the dominant view is that trans-boundary assets belong to the post-colonial states and the new states have to agree how to share their jointly owned assets. Second, Ethiopia was and is an independent state and it was not a party to the 1929 and 1959 agreements. Historical records also indicate that Britain, Egypt and the Sudan conspired and excluded

Ethiopia from the negotiation. In this respect, Wuhibegezer Ferede and Sheferawu Abebe, writing on the Efficacy of Water Treaties in the Eastern Nile Basin outline two approaches that evolve from the principles of international law.[25] The authors show the fundamental differences between upstream and downstream countries in that upstream countries (Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea and South Sudan) appear to favor clean slate policy while downstream countries (Sudan and Egypt) favor colonial treaties. [26] Notwithstanding the preference of one or another form of legal principle, Egypt's insistence on colonial treaties collapses simply because Ethiopia was not a colony of Britain or indeed any other European power.

Now that we have seen Egypt's historical and legal arguments falling apart, the next step is to examine the third foundation of the Egyptian stance – the environmental aspects of the dam. Previous literature indicated that carbon emissions and contaminations of rivers that cross national boundaries are examples of trans-boundary environmental problems. Hence, policy formation requires enforceable global treaties, sound national policy and the examination of advances in a number of disciplines.[27] Furthermore, investments in big national projects such as stadiums, mineral extraction, oil and gas, canals, big dams, highways, and big architectural projects add behavioral and political dimensions to the science, technology and the economics of such undertakings. Most of the finest buildings and stadiums that host world cup games were and are being constructed in that national pride. And behavioral and emotional factors dominate financial arguments. In other words, national projects by their nature have behavioral dimensions and may not be captured by the paradigms of rationality and net present values. Time will tell whether the Ethiopian dam is different.

The mainstream literature on environmental economics focuses on welfare measurement, sustainability, technological change, externality and green accounting. The world commission on environment and development (aka the Bruntland Commission, 1987), for example, states that “sustainable development is meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Consistent with this understanding, the Nile River system has both trans-boundary and non-trans-boundary features for the riparian states and hence Egypt, in theory, may have a cause for concern. This concern can nonetheless be resolved through international instruments and institutions and bilateral relations that are based on mutual respect and trust. The international convention on the protection and use of trans-boundary and

international lakes which was signed by nearly 40 countries does not provide the base for resolving disputes, and worse, no country from Africa (including Egypt) has actually ratified it. It nonetheless can be another point of departure. The United Nations Environmental program could also be a facilitator. Furthermore, as noted earlier, Africa has frameworks for inter-basin development. The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) has been a major institutional development which enables all riparian states to collaborate and act as equal members. Egypt's effort to undermine[28] this agreement is a mistake.

Other features of the leaked report of the International Panel of Experts cover the main factors of the project. Among other things, it confirms that: (i) GERD is economically feasible; (ii) the design meets international standards, subject to minor "corrections"; (iii) the contractor is reliable and has extensive international expertise and reputation in building large dams; (iv) the environmental impact study within Ethiopia is adequate and the trans-boundary effect on the Sudan is favorable and controls flood; and (v) the section on trans-boundary effect on Egypt requires additional study using complex models and actual data rather than reliance on desk work. In short, the authors of the 48 pages-long confidential report did not say that they expect a catastrophe and the vanishing of the Egyptian nation if the project gets completed. In short, Egypt is not in any imminent danger. This conclusion has ramifications for the multilateral institutions that refused to finance the project. In summary, Egypt's opposition to GERD is indeed misplaced. Its return to the negotiation table and the African Union and the ratification of the Nile River Basin Cooperative Framework and Convention on the Protection and Use of Trans-boundary Watercourses and International Lakes are avenues for resolving the sticky problems of water sharing.[29]

END NOTES

- [1] <http://tinyurl.com/npfxdwm>
- [2] The NBI is composed of ten countries: Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), as well as Eritrea as an observer.
- [3] Hassan (2011): <http://www.ethiomedias.com/augur/4363.html>
- [4] <http://tinyurl.com/kxaxngt>
- [5] <http://tinyurl.com/kxaxngt>
- [6] http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2014/03/06/troubled_waters
- [7] <http://www.madote.com/2014/02/is-egypt-seeking-military-defense-pact.html>
- [8] <http://tinyurl.com/qgvfbzd>

- [9] <http://tinyurl.com/lpbl7o>
- [10] <http://tinyurl.com/nkzhp2p>
- [11] <http://tinyurl.com/ns6w47u>
- [12] <http://tinyurl.com/ok8xrjw>
- [13] <http://tinyurl.com/nxjp6h8>
- [14] <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article46307>
- [15] <http://www.ethiomeia.com/broadway/4503.html>
- [16] <http://www.internationalrivers.org/>
- [17] <http://tinyurl.com/kha8zdc>
- [18] A number of analysts have indicated that Egypt has not been an efficient user of the available water. Not only is water not priced properly, but the Egyptian authorities also have allowed the expansion of water devouring crops of rice and sugar cane- against the advice of experts and bilateral donors. The irrational and increasingly thirsty nature of Egyptian use of water has failed to recognize the realities of our time: escalating shortages of water exacerbated by global warming, population pressure and life-style changes.
- [19] <http://tinyurl.com/px6opl>
- [20] Natural Resources Forum, Volume 23 #1, February 1999 pp. 3-30.
- [21] <http://gurukul.ucc.american.edu/ted/lesotho.htm>
- [22] <http://tinyurl.com/ldjm9ug>
- [23] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qi0IRivzINM>
- [24] <http://www.ethiomeia.com/14news/5712.html>
- [25] Wuhibegezer Ferede and Sheferawu Abebe (2014), Africa Spectrum, 49, 1, 55-67, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/kc6hwud>
- [26] It is not clear whether some of the governments would change their position as a result of Egypt's recent diplomatic offensive.
- [27] <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?articleid=17038597>
- [28] <http://tinyurl.com/q4x45p2>
- [29] <http://tinyurl.com/pe6lsce>

“Misplaced Opposition To The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam”, 15/05/2014, online at:
<http://www.eurasiareview.com/15052014-misplaced-opposition-grand-ethiopian-renaissance-dam-analysis/>

❖ Egyptian Spies Captured While Gathering Intelligence on Ethiopian Dams

The recent arrest of three Egyptian spies by Ethiopian security forces is the latest escalation in tensions over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD).

Captured on May 5 in separate locations across the nation, the three Egyptian men stand accused of gathering intelligence on Ethiopia's dam system. One man was arrested at the Abobo Dam, while the other two were arrested as they attempted to travel to the GERD. It is the latter of the two dams that is of greater significance.

The GERD is a massive hydroelectric dam being constructed on the headwaters of the Nile River in Ethiopia. It will be the largest dam in Africa, coming in at over 5,900 feet (1,800 meters) long, and it will have a capacity of over 2.6 billion gallons of water. More important than its size, this dam's geopolitical significance is immense.

Egypt sees this dam as a direct threat to its own national stability. Almost 100 percent of Egypt's 83 million inhabitants live on the banks of the north-flowing Nile. Egyptians see the GERD as the equivalent of a giant spigot that Ethiopia is capable of turning on and off at will.

With Egypt so dependent on the Nile, any threat to those life-giving waters is seen as a threat to the nation itself. While Ethiopia claims the dam won't affect the water flow to the north, it hasn't been enough to convince the Egyptians.

Negotiations have been rough, with Egypt threatening to bomb the dam should its construction be finished. Egypt has a vast army and works closely with South Sudan, which recently established a military pact with Egypt. These factors lend credibility to the Egyptian threats.

Egypt is currently embroiled in enough strife at home with elections and terrorists running wild in the Sinai Peninsula. It doesn't need a conflict with Ethiopia on top of that. But, should the Nile River suddenly become the Nile Creek, Egypt would be forced into action.

The arrest of the three spies shows that despite its domestic struggles, Egypt is still wary of the Ethiopian threat to the south. Once Egypt regains its domestic footing, prepare for it to focus more attention on defending its Achilles heel/lifeline: the Nile River.

This particular African crisis is only a degree or two away from boiling over. Do you want to know more about how Egypt may respond to the GERD threat? If you do, follow this link to the analysis written by columnist Robert Morley, “War Over the Nile River.”

“Egyptian Spies Captured While Gathering Intelligence on Ethiopian Dams”, 12/05/2014, online at:
<http://www.thetrumpet.com/article/11744.19.0.0/middle-east/egypt/egyptian-spies-captured-while-gathering-intelligence-on-ethiopian-dams>

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❖ **Al-Ahram honours High dam Russian engineers**

Al-Ahram institution honours Russian as well Egyptian engineers who participated in the construction of the High Dam in Aswan as part of Egypt's jubilee celebration.

Al-Ahram honoured Russian and Egyptian engineers who participated in the construction of Egypt's Aswan High Dam in a ceremony Monday afternoon.

The ceremony comes as part of the Nile diversion in Egypt's jubilee celebration. On 14 May 1964, then president Gamal Abdel-Nasser and Soviet Leader Nikita Khrushchev marked the first stage of construction of the High Dam of Aswan by diverting the course of the Nile River.

The 15-member delegation flew from Moscow on Saturday to take part in a number of events planned in the coming few days including a celebration organized by the Society of the Graduates of Russian and Soviet Universities, at the Egyptian Opera House in central Cairo.

The celebration, hosted by Al-Ahram, was attended by its CEO, Dr. Ahmed El-Sayid El-Naggar, Russian Ambassador to Cairo Serge Kirpichenko, prominent journalist Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, former housing minister Hassaballah El-Kafrawy and current irrigation minister Mohamed Abdel El-Motleb.

Eighty-two-year-old Vadim Radtechnenko, told Al-Ahram's Arabic newspaper he arrived to Cairo 55 years ago, on exactly 25 November 1959. He was among the first of the Soviet delegation, constituting of ten engineers, arriving to work on the first phase of the dam.

The day following his arrival, Radtechnenko met with Egypt's president at the time Gamal Abdel-Nasser in Cairo University's Engineering department.

Abdel-Nasser was very excited while talking about the future, Radtechnenko recalled.

Radtechnenko also recalled a noteworthy fact about his stay in Egypt, two months into his time there, his father was delegated by the Soviet government to travel to Egypt and work as head of the engineers. Radtechnenko worked for two years in Egypt, ultimately leaving with a valued picture of

him and the Egyptian president. His father stayed on for six years, earning an order of merit first class from the late president.

Vadim Radtechnenko is currently the vice-president of the non-governmental International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD).

President Nasser's children Abdel Hakim, Hoda and Mona Abdel Nasser also attended the celebration among other public figures.

The celebration included the screening of a short documentary produced by Al-Ahram Archives showing press coverage of the dam's construction process in Al-Ahram's daily newspaper along with a segment of president Nasser's speech during the Nile diversion process in 1964.

In his speech during the celebration, El-Naggar said the Aswan High Dam was considered the biggest project of the 20th century and that Egypt did not harm any other downstream country it constructed the dam. He added that this is contrary to upstream countries whose water share was impacted, a reference to the current crisis between Egypt and Ethiopia.

Russian Ambassador to Cairo Serge Kirpichenko expressed his respect for the Egyptian people and praised the cooperation between Egypt and Russia describing president Nasser as the one and only leader of Egypt.

The Russian engineers of the High Dam came along with the Russian popular initiative delegation currently visiting Cairo.

The Soviet Union aided Egypt financially and technically in constructing the High Dam after the World Bank rejected to finance the project.

"Al-Ahram honours High dam Russian engineers", 12/05/2014, online at:

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/101089/Egypt/Politics-/AlAhram-honours-High-dam-Russian-engineers-.aspx>

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❖ The River Dam By Mankelklot Haile Selassie

The river is of course Abay (Blue Nile) and the dam is Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). The target, mainly in relation to GERD, of this article is the Ethiopian Diaspora residing in all of the Continents. Let me define the Diaspora structurally from the outset. It is composed of: a) the progressive and democratic individuals, (the elites), b) the established civic organizations, such as the “Ethiopian People’s Congress for United Struggle (Shengo), c) the opposition political parties, d) the social media, and e) the general population residing in the Continents. It is a formidable force. I have been observing specifically the community I am part of moving with deliberation, step by step, feeling and reflecting, along side, almost parallel, with the Ethiopian society inside Ethiopia. I was part of it too. There were many factors that contributed to this type of organized activities. I can safely generalize this progressive community involvement to all the Ethiopian communities residing in different parts of the world outside of Ethiopia. There is nothing that the Diaspora is lacking. It is a complete and an all round body with diverse building factors for social and economic development inside Ethiopia, of course when and if done with fitting and timely strategy. So, the potential is there. Intact. It is time to unleash this potential for an all out positive and measurable impact through material and diplomatic participation mainly in support of the actively working opposition political organizations inside Ethiopia. With the absence of Meles Zenawi there is, right now, the opportunity to give it a try. So, let us not miss this opportunity.

The opposition forces inside Ethiopia are there. Physically and emotionally, talking and walking among the Ethiopian society. They are there inside Ethiopia, leaving and breathing, the ups and the downs, the economic and the social miseries of the society. The opposition forces are there to feel and touch the width and the depth of the poverty the society is buried under. Let us not be fooled by what is going on in Addis Ababa. The poverty in Ethiopia literally can be felt and touched. It is here the input of the Diaspora is urgently needed to join hands with the opposition political parties inside Ethiopia. It is here the unleashing of the potential of the Diaspora is needed urgently. Once one genuinely accepts the need for the timely and cooperative contribution for the economic development hence taking the necessary steps to eradicate poverty then one can easily see building GERD to be part of this positive effort. Poverty in Ethiopia is man made. The natural resources, including the rivers, Ethiopia endowed with were not correctly employed due to lack of proper management. Unfortunately, politically organized bodies have contributed to this man made poverty to linger on

and take-out old, young and babies forever. This shouldn't happen with the natural resources, with intelligence society, and with the skilled manpower that Ethiopia is endowed with. Even though, the topic of this article is "The River The Dam," I am linking it to "change of strategy" and "holding political power." I am linking it because, once the opposition political and the organized civic organizations in the Diaspora accepted the immediate implementation of these two interconnected courses of actions then the acceptance of the construction of GERD would logically follow. Because one cannot be for "holding political power" in earnest and at the same time be against the construction of GERD. Because the Dam has become the project of the Ethiopian society. It is politically wrong to go against the interest of the society. Further more, an important point to note is that the effort has made the society in a very subtle manner to think and act in unison. Accurately undiscovered and untapped latent attributes of Ethiopian culture.

WHY CHANGE POLITICAL STRATEGY?

The changing of political strategy is the precursor for holding political power. It is not the precursor for building the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. It is very important to realize that the traditionally applied strategy and methods of political struggle that existed since the Ethiopian revolution are not working. It has become archaic and obsolete. I think we have to accept this fact. As the current regime became smarter and smarter the opposition political parties and the civic organizations including the ones in the Diaspora became monotonous and boring. They remained where they were totally devoid of creativity. Very defensive too. It appears the immediate desire to hold political power and improving the living conditions of the society slowly died. This behavior have manifested itself repeatedly when an action was not followed by another finishing action. A good example is the election of May 15, 2015. In fact, it is doubtful whether the burning desire to hold political power and improve the living conditions of the society ever existed from the very beginning. I challenge any one of the political leaders particularly of the Diaspora if they ever had any sleepless night thinking, now, about how to hold political power, yes how to hold political power, and alleviate the economic misery of Ethiopian society. It should not be simply for the sake of holding political power. If so it misses the objective. It is to empower the society. It is to unleash the potential of the society in general and of individuals' creativity and determination in particular. That is why it is needed immediately. To revive this dead and dying, that is, this mystified political power thing, creatively changed strategy with a specific target to hold political power is critically important.

As the current political, social, and economic situations in Ethiopia are requiring creatively changed strategy it also requires the organized political and civic bodies to be a “realist” not an “idealist.” Grasping the realities in the field and changing strategy go together. A realist is a practical person one who monitors the realities carefully and decides to tackle them. I argue that the “realities” that are openly hovering over Ethiopia would force one to change ones political strategy because nowadays changing political strategy as situations demand is to be a realist. These realities have existed for a long, long time. They need to be tackled according to the nature of the realities and immediately too. How? By changing political strategy and holding political power. What are the “realities” hovering over Ethiopia? Here are some of the concrete realities on the ground in Ethiopia, not in order of importance: Financial institutions favor the regime.

Forced random relocations of communities The suffering of political prisoners The cracks within the regime since the death of Meles

Shortages of electricity, water and communication structures The inadequacy of health provision The education system is robbing future nation builders Poverty is extensive and unbearable The constitution needs to be reconstructed Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is being built These are some of concrete realities. One more time, to be a realist is to critically assess ones political strategies and tactics one has been employing so far, to have an impact on the above realities. If assessed boldly and truthfully one would realize ones deficiencies hence no success have been achieved so far.

Nothing. So, what should be done? The blunt and true response to this question is to completely change ones strategy and hold political power. For how long can one shun even talking bout holding political power? Changing political strategy should be inseparably linked to holding political power.

They always should go together. I am repeatedly hammering these two phrases so bear with me.

Two steps to initiate change of strategy with the objective of holding political power. The first one is to stop or minimize dwelling only on the negatives. I argue that it is crippling the political struggle of the Diaspora. Particularly after the political environment, to a certain extent, due to the weakening of the political structure within the regime is changed and changing after the death of Meles Zenawi not to take advantage of this political situation is unforgivable. It is extreme and deadly weakness by itself. One of the routine job of the opposition political parties is to be nosy and look for any crack of any size within the contending party. And then, when found one, search for any possible means to take advantage of the exposed crack. One has to be always on alert mode, on his tiptoe, not sleeping, to take advantage of these kinds of political situations.

So, instead of emphasizing the negatives, be on the side of the peasants and individual entrepreneurs, by pointing out and emphasizing what they are practically doing in the field now. There are segments in the society in the field of agriculture and in the field of privately owned small scale industries slowly, step by step, but surely participating in these segments of activities. They should be recognized and commended for what they are trying. Accepting these facts do not hinder one from harshly criticizing the regime. The criticisms, preferably constructive ones, directed toward the activities of the peasants and entrepreneurs, such as what the activities are lacking and what should be done to improve them, or simply correcting the wrongs, should be in target with these positive social activities on the ground. So, stop nitpicking. Be a realist.

The second one is negotiation and compromise. By the way I have discussed this issue a number of times in my previous articles. In fact, I have suggested in one of my articles to use International organizations, both governmental and non-governmental to initiate this process. When? Now! At least try it. Given the existing contradictions between the regime on one hand and the opposition political parties and civic organizations on the other, to change strategy and then hold the political power, negotiation and compromise is a must. For, for one to hold political power one has to be inside Ethiopia, inside the society. This is a must too. Therefore, one has to be prepared to deal with this hard to swallow phenomenon, that is, “negotiation and compromise,” if one had the burning desire to hold political power at any cost which, unfortunately, is lacking in the Diaspora opposition forces. The end justifies the means. Specially when used for a good cause it would be non-regrettable.

HOLDING POLITICAL POWER

Holding political power is the key to tackle the above itemized “realities” on the ground. The slogan “holding political power,” must replace often spitted out slogan, “changing the democratic system.” A very boring slogan. If one has the burning desire to hold political power and turn around the lives of the society for the better, changing the democratic system is an automatically follow up action. It is a given. It should not be raised as a primary slogan. In fact, in my opinion it has become a cover up for ones deadly weaknesses. Do you know what follows next? “To change the system we have to be united.” There you have it! It is a regressive process. It is stepping away from the main slogan. Unity should not be an ultimate end step or process. It should be used sporadically for specific, timely, objective such as demonstrations, or public meetings, and, above all for elections. Kinijit was a coalition, a unity, formed to beat Meles Zenawi in the election of particularly of May 15, 2015. He

was knocked down because of the coalition, but unfortunately there was no follow up action to keep him there on the floor permanently. The coalition formed by four political parties that was called Kinijit could be a blue print that can be replicated to successfully win this coming national election. If the opposition political organizations were told they have lost when they know they have won then it is their responsibility to show their gut by vehemently challenging the regime by any means necessary. One can say with full confidence the society will be behind them.

Therefore, instead, right now, why not focus first on: holding political power and then release the political prisoners; holding political power and then reconstruct the constitution; holding political power and stop the random relocation of communities, such as what is being done on Kemant; holding political power and eradicate poverty. What about holding political power and fully control the Dam which is being built, and also to fully utilize the rivers of Ethiopia for irrigation? Why not think, decide, and take these gutsy moves, that is, first to hold political power and tackle the issues itemized above. I hope you have followed the logic of my argument. So, stop whining and walk the talking. There is too much talk going around. In my opinion, the correct interpretation of walking the talk should be holding political power. If not exit the field of the political struggle. Because, in the first place you are crowding the space. Secondly, you are becoming stumbling block. Churning out press releases, hiping up negatives upon negatives, demonstrations after demonstrations and public meetings after public meetings, in trying to tackle the above itemized realities did not work and it will not work. We have been doing all these things for the last 23 years. The individual who was controlling the political, the social and the economic system of the country, on the top of that the one who was fully controlling and running the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary branches of the country is no more here. So, why not take advantage of the existing weak political structure that exists within the regime? If one does not wish to enter Ethiopia and be counted by being part of the needed political struggle then let Ethiopia, the opposition political parties, the EPRDF, the social media, and above all the society at large interact, ferment, fight it out, and take its own natural course. I will say it again, if the civic and the political organizations are not willing to get involved physically and mentally by somehow entering Ethiopia then leave Ethiopia alone. There has to be some how a cut off time to say enough is enough.

I argue that holding political power must be the heart of the current political struggle. The press releases, the demonstrations, the public meetings should be to educate the society by emphasizing the importance and the immediate need to hold political power. At this time, emphasizing on these

activities is part of changing strategy. Without the burning desire in ones gut to hold political power and tackle the real situations that exist in Ethiopia simply talking about them is wasting time. Or, it is simply trying to perpetuate ones political life here among the Diaspora. I am quite sure these political and civic organizations will talk about the same issues for the coming fifteen to twenty years, or even more. It seemed they are molded and built for it. It appears, through time they have become addicted to it. A culture that is affecting the Ethiopian communities all over the Continents, that is, the Diaspora. So, it is time to completely eradicate this culture.

THE RIVER THE DAM

Here I am going to focus mainly on those who are challenging the construction of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. It is extremely wise for those who are challenging Ethiopia's right to harness its natural resources, specifically Abay river(Blue Nile), in whatever way deemed applicable for its economic development, to reflect upon the history of Ethiopia. Ethiopia never hesitated to protect and defend its right and interests from external aggressors. For example, for the current presidential candidate of Egypt and his likes, to threaten Ethiopia with war demanding to suspend building the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, or else, should be reminded of the battles of 1875 and 1876 between Egypt and Ethiopia. The army of Khadiv Ismael was annihilated by Ethiopians at the battle of Gundat and Gura under the leadership of King Yohannes IV.

The political leaders of Egypt should be fully aware of the fact that the fighting spirit, the determination, and the aggressiveness of the Ethiopian people are still alive, stronger, and better. This fighting spirit is a generational phenomenon. When and if campaigned and told to come in defense of Ethiopia's interest the Ethiopian society will come forward in full force to be sacrificed. It is in its blood. Therefore, the external powers should be aware of this instilled behavior of Ethiopian people. It is amazing. What makes the Egyptian leaders to think that the Ethiopian people will fold their hands and seat idle, instead of vehemently challenging, while the Egyptian leaders threaten to go to war to protect the interests of Egyptian people? Commonsense. It is the immense responsibility of the regime to pay attention and to take seriously to whatever type of propaganda and threat being spread by the regime of Egypt. It must be prepared to challenge any possible incident in relation to the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

This is 21st century. The era where self-determination of States, members of the United Nations Organizations at that, is sacred. Ethiopia, one of the founding members of this UNO was being sabotaged, a very sophisticated sabotage at that, by a branch within the UNO regarding the Abay

(Blue Nile) river. She was told to get permission from Egypt and Sudan to use its river. Ethiopia, a sovereign Nation, no more can be ignored and no more to be considered a small, black (the color that Ethiopia is proud of), and a dispensable Nation as it was done in 1929 and 1959 when the so called Blue Nile agreement was signed. The so called Blue Nile agreement of 1929 and 1959 was deliberately done in line with just characterized behavior. Ethiopia was completely ignored. As if it did not exist. Didn't the members of the UN know about it? Yes they do. It smells fishy. Racism could be one of the factors here. Shouldn't Ethiopia has the right to renegotiate now the agreement signed in her absence, where Ethiopia was the only source of the element to be discussed and signed then? So, it is a fact that Ethiopia did not participate and signed the 1929 and 1959 so called Blue Nile agreement. She was ignored and uninvited. Taking 1959 as an example, since 1959, in the last 55 years, things have changed diametrically. For the Egyptian government whose mode of thinking and rationalization amazingly did not change a bit since 1959, it is better for it, the Egyptian government that is, to suck it up, come to its senses and deal with the issue with the 21st Century mode of thinking and rationalization. The 1929, amazingly even the 1959, stone age type mentality have long gone.

The people of Ethiopia have changed in many important factors since 1959. Its political outlook and its political consciousness have transformed extensively. The repeated, full and enthusiastic participation in consecutively held elections is a testament to the level of its political consciousness. Even though it did not benefit from the elections. Ultimately, the Ethiopian society have reached a level to see what is hurting it and what is benefiting it. It cannot be fooled anymore. Consider the building of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in line with this critical observance of the Ethiopian society. The Ethiopian society is lining up to build it and see its fruit as soon as possible. Contrary to the negative opinion of some of the Ethiopian Diaspora intellectuals and the opposition forces. Contrary to the international organizations who sided with Egypt. The Western governments including the government of the United States of America must stop siding with the Egyptian political leaders. In fact it is better for the United States of America to side with Ethiopia. Regarding some of the Ethiopian intellectuals in the Diaspora who came out openly against the construction of the Dam, should have thought twice before taking such treasonous positions. They have taken a very regrettable position. Here is why it is treasonous. There is a confrontation between Ethiopia and Egypt. Between two Nations. The International organizations, both governmental and non-governmental know about it. How would an Ethiopian, the immediate witness at that, validate

his/her position with the full knowledge of cause and the nature of the confrontation? The confrontation could lead to war. Are these treasonous individuals going to raise their guns against Ethiopia in collaboration with the Egyptian government? The logical implication is as clear as that. It is very baffling. Further more, with the full knowledge of what Egypt is doing its level best to destabilize Ethiopia using religion, for example, to come up with any negative criticism against the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is to conspire with Egyptian political leaders. Hence it is a full fledged treason against the interests and aspirations of Ethiopian people. Which ever way one sliced it this is what it is. Treason against a State is a crime punishable by law. The contradictions between them and the regime shouldn't have come between them and the construction of GERD. It shouldn't have come between them and the interests of Ethiopian people. Common sense. The political leaders of Egypt never wished for the economic development of Ethiopia. Never. Don't forget what Boutros Boutros Ghalli did. Further more, one should know that it is a question of self-determination of a sovereign country; it is a question of national security; it is a question of the interests and aspirations of Ethiopian society. For Ethiopians nothing in the world should trump up these important issues. Nothing should come between Ethiopians and this God given ownership and neutralize his/her rationalization. Not even the EPRDF.

The population increase is another factor to be considered seriously in line with the building of the DAM. The population have increased to over 90 million. In 1959 when the so called Nile agreement was signed the population of Ethiopia was about 20 million. Therefore, obviously, there are a lot of mouths to feed now. Hence the urgent need of economic development. A progressive and at the same time a comprehensive economic development plan and policy are required. The poverty situation is very dire. Unless all economic developing tools available comprehensively unleashed to attack poverty, as the population is increased so does poverty. One of the available tools for alleviating poverty in Ethiopia is the harnessing of Abay (Blue Nile) river. Whether for producing hydroelectric power or for irrigation. I think it is commonsense.

Here is a extremely important point to note. When an Ethiopian speaks of Abay river (Blue Nile) it is the segment of 500 miles length inside Ethiopia with its source Lake Tana, and, with all its tributaries. It has numerous tributaries, about 28 of them. All these, the 500 mile length of Abay, its tributaries, the fauna and the flora within, and surrounding them are the property of Ethiopian people. No one has the right to any kind of claim on the 500 miles stretch of the river. To arrogantly appear to have a claim of any sort on this particular natural resources of Ethiopia is tantamount to have a

claim to its mineral resources inside its territory. In fact it is simply trying to own Ethiopia itself. The basis of International law concerning the Ethiopian rivers ought to be these facts on the ground. If the International law did not apply these facts on the ground, that is, regarding Ethiopia, then even the International law itself ought to be challenged and the matter should be renegotiated, not to be adhered to. Absolutely never give in. Hence, the logical premise for any type of negotiation and compromises, when it comes to the irrational challenge of the Egyptian political leaders, that is, if and when needed regarding directly or indirectly sharing Abay river (Blue Nile), must be based on this non contestable God given ownership. That is Abay river(the Blue Nile), particularly the 500 miles with its tributaries. If the International law neglects this inalienable right of Ethiopia to using its river then it has to be taken to the relevant international court. The bottom line of my argument is the international law that dealt with Abay river ought to be renegotiated.

FUNDING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE DAM

1. The International Organizations

It is critically important for the International Organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, to accept this Nature given ownership right of Ethiopia. The ownership right is non-negotiable. The funding organizations such as International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, including those United Nations linked Economic Development branches should consider this inalienable right to utilized ones own sources for economic development, without looking into the skin of the color and the level of economic development. The very nature of ignoring Ethiopia during the negotiation of 1929 and 1959 was simply racism. Ethiopia was treated unfairly by openly siding with the claim of Egypt on the Abay (Blue Nile) river. Particularly on the Abay river that has to do with the 500 miles segment within Ethiopia. Ethiopia was deliberately denied funding to build the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam particularly by funding International Organizations. They have to reexamine their positions and invest in this historic project.

As summarized by Minja, Seid, and Mammo, (Misplaced Opposition to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam), the International Panel of Experts (IPE) on Ethiopia reported as follows:

- (i) unlike the options of smaller dams which would have included potential irrigation projects, GERD is an energy production project and any fear of large and permanent reduction in the flow of freshwater to downstream countries is unfounded;
- (ii) the filling up of the dam is planned, to be done in stages by taking into account rainfall patterns and the catchments area;

- (iii) both the financial and social cost-benefit preliminary analysis of the project on upstream and downstream countries are favorable and the expected damages on downstream countries are not insurmountable;
- (iv) the preliminary findings about the project's side effects on Egypt is not sufficient and hence there is an information (hydrological) void, and much of the current allegations and threats are based on unfounded Egyptian fears;
- (v) work has progressed to the extent that, at the time of writing this article, the project has reached a degree of completion rate of 31% and the water diversion has been successfully carried out;
- (vi) the expected loss of water due to evaporation for the new project is not worse than what Egypt is currently losing from its environmentally unfriendly projects and poor water management (A number of analysts have indicated that Egypt has not been an efficient user of the available water. Not only is water not priced properly, but the Egyptian authorities also have allowed the expansion of water devouring crops of rice and sugar cane- against the advice of experts and bilateral donors. The irrational and increasingly thirsty nature of Egyptian use of water has failed to recognize the realities of our time: escalating shortages of water exacerbated by global warming, population pressure and life-style changes.)
- (vii) recent geological and hydrological studies have documented an abundant level of ground water in the Nile basin countries and hence downstream countries will not be thirsty if upstream countries build dams that generate electricity.

It is clear, therefore, that Egypt's no dam policy or stance against large energy producing dams in upstream countries is a misplaced opposition and therefore calls for a new thinking in Cairo.

Given the concrete, fact based, evidence provided by International Panel of Experts (IPE), the International funding organizations, both governmental and nongovernmental have no reason but to fund this life changing Dam being constructed by Ethiopian people.

2. The Ethiopian Communities Residing in the Different Continents

Ethiopia is calling the Diaspora to fully participate in the successful completion of the Dam. She is appealing to everyone, to remove the wall of the contradictions, based on the argument provided above, and, the report of the International Panel of Experts (IPE), that exists between the Diaspora and the regime. The contradiction is obstructing to see who the ultimate beneficiary of the Dam is. It is the people of Ethiopia. Particularly in reference to this Dam, taking positive step regarding GERD implies taking steps to protect and to defend Ethiopia from outside aggressors from any direction. I

strongly argue that, this Dam issue is turned into how much the spirit and determination of our for-fathers is reviving in us to stand up against any direct or indirect intrusion in the God given right of Ethiopia and its people. I think it is a measuring yard at this critical time. In addition, the failure of this Dam will not be the failure of only of the regime. It will also be the failure of the Ethiopians in Diaspora. The Ethiopian people inside Ethiopia is doing its share. Never think that it does not concern us Diasporans. It concerns us one-hundred-percent.

So, What Can the Diaspora Do?

At least three things:

1. Campaign and lobby to stand against the campaign and the lobby of Egypt. Use the article by Minga, Seid and Mammo: Misplaced Opposition to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. Simply attach a cover letter to this article and mail it to the White House, the Congress, and to all relevant International organizations including IMF and the World Bank.
2. Organize demonstrations and public meetings to educate the Ethiopian society all over the Continents about the crux of the issue regarding the Dam. Use the article mentioned under # 1. In addition invite one or all the three Professors who organized the article to the public meetings by covering their expenses. I don't see why it cannot be done.

3. Make a generous contribution of money.

Ignore the campaign of some of the intellectuals and political organizations, who are conspiring with Egypt against the interests of Ethiopia. Conspiring against the building of the Dam siding with Egyptian political leaders is the mother of all treason. No question about it. One cannot, in good faith, especially the intellectuals, be purely against the construction of the Dam but not against any move made by the Egypt's leadership that stood against the interests of Ethiopia. It is simply shallowness. The best thing for them should have been, for the Conspirators that is, to simply shut up and say nothing. The bones of our for-fathers are rolling inside their graves. They would have not allowed any foreign aggressors to walk all over Ethiopia. It is the question of independence. It is the question of self-determination. It is not simply the construction of the Dam. So, think about it critically and deeply.

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follow. Because one cannot be for “holding political power” in earnest and at the same time be against the construction of GERD. Because the Dam has become the project of the Ethiopian society. It is politically wrong to go against the interest of the society. Further more, an important point to note is that the effort has made the society in a very subtle manner to think and act in unison. Accurately undiscovered and untapped latent attributes of Ethiopian culture.

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immediately too. How? By changing political strategy and holding political power. What are the “realities” hovering over Ethiopia? Here are some of the concrete realities on the ground in Ethiopia, not in order of importance: Financial institutions favor the regime. Forced random relocations of communities The suffering of political prisoners

The cracks within the regime since the death of Meles Shortages of electricity, water and communication structures The inadequacy of health provision The education system is robbing future nation builders Poverty is extensive and unbearable The constitution needs to be reconstructed Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is being built These are some of concrete realities. One more time, to be a realist is to critically assess ones political strategies and tactics one has been employing so far, to have an impact on the above realities. If assessed boldly and truthfully one would realize ones deficiencies hence no success have been achieved so far. Nothing. So, what should be done? The blunt and true response to this question is to completely change ones strategy and hold political power. For how long can one shun even talking bout holding political power? Changing political strategy should be inseparably linked to holding political power. They always should go together. I am repeatedly hammering these two phrases so bear with me.

Two steps to initiate change of strategy with the objective of holding political power. The first one is to stop or minimize dwelling only on the negatives. I argue that it is crippling the political struggle of the Diaspora. Particularly after the political environment, to a certain extent, due to the weakening of the political structure within the regime is changed and changing after the death of Meles Zenawi not to take advantage of this political situation is unforgivable. It is extreme and deadly weakness by itself. One of the routine job of the opposition political parties is to be nosy and look for any crack of any size within the contending party. And then, when found one, search for any possible means to take advantage of the exposed crack. One has to be always on alert mode, on his tiptoe, not sleeping, to take advantage of these kinds of political situations.

So, instead of emphasizing the negatives, be on the side of the peasants and individual entrepreneurs, by pointing out and emphasizing what they are practically doing in the field now. There are segments in the society in the field of agriculture and in the field of privately owned small scale industries slowly, step by step, but surely participating in these segments of activities. They should be recognized and commended for what they are trying. Accepting these facts do not hinder one from harshly criticizing the regime. The criticisms, preferably constructive ones, directed toward the activities of the peasants and entrepreneurs, such as what the activities are lacking and what should

be done to improve them, or simply correcting the wrongs, should be in target with these positive social activities on the ground. So, stop nitpicking. Be a realist.

The second one is negotiation and compromise. By the way I have discussed this issue a number of times in my previous articles. In fact, I have suggested in one of my articles to use International organizations, both governmental and non-governmental to initiate this process. When? Now! At least try it. Given the existing contradictions between the regime on one hand and the opposition political parties and civic organizations on the other, to change strategy and then hold the political power, negotiation and compromise is a must. For, for one to hold political power one has to be inside Ethiopia, inside the society. This is a must too. Therefore, one has to be prepared to deal with this hard to swallow phenomenon, that is, “negotiation and compromise,” if one had the burning desire to hold political power at any cost which, unfortunately, is lacking in the Diaspora opposition forces. The end justifies the means. Specially when used for a good cause it would be non-regrettable.

HOLDING POLITICAL POWER

Holding political power is the key to tackle the above itemized “realities” on the ground. The slogan “holding political power,” must replace often spitted out slogan, “changing the democratic system.” A very boring slogan. If one has the burning desire to hold political power and turn around the lives of the society for the better, changing the democratic system is an automatically follow up action. It is a given. It should not be raised as a primary slogan. In fact, in my opinion it has become a cover up for ones deadly weaknesses. Do you know what follows next? “To change the system we have to be united.” There you have it! It is a regressive process. It is stepping away from the main slogan. Unity should not be an ultimate end step or process. It should be used sporadically for specific, timely, objective such as demonstrations, or public meetings, and, above all for elections. Kinijit was a coalition, a unity, formed to beat Meles Zenawi in the election of particularly of May 15, 2015. He was knocked down because of the coalition, but unfortunately there was no follow up action to keep him there on the floor permanently. The coalition formed by four political parties that was called Kinijit could be a blue print that can be replicated to successfully win this coming national election. If the opposition political organizations were told they have lost when they know they have won then it is their responsibility to show their gut by vehemently challenging the regime by any means necessary. One can say with full confidence the society will be behind them.

Therefore, instead, right now, why not focus first on: holding political power and then release the political prisoners; holding political power and then reconstruct the constitution; holding political power and stop the random relocation of communities, such as what is being done on Kemant; holding political power and eradicate poverty. What about holding political power and fully control the Dam which is being built, and also to fully utilize the rivers of Ethiopia for irrigation? Why not think, decide, and take these gutsy moves, that is, first to hold political power and tackle the issues itemized above. I hope you have followed the logic of my argument. So, stop whining and walk the talking. There is too much talk going around. In my opinion, the correct interpretation of walking the talk should be holding political power. If not exit the field of the political struggle. Because, in the first place you are crowding the space. Secondly, you are becoming stumbling block. Churning out press releases, hiping up negatives upon negatives, demonstrations after demonstrations and public meetings after public meetings, in trying to tackle the above itemized realities did not work and it will not work. We have been doing all these things for the last 23 years. The individual who was controlling the political, the social and the economic system of the country, on the top of that the one who was fully controlling and running the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary branches of the country is no more here. So, why not take advantage of the existing weak political structure that exists within the regime? If one does not wish to enter Ethiopia and be counted by being part of the needed political struggle then let Ethiopia, the opposition political parties, the EPRDF, the social media, and above all the society at large interact, ferment, fight it out, and take its own natural course. I will say it again, if the civic and the political organizations are not willing to get involved physically and mentally by somehow entering Ethiopia then leave Ethiopia alone. There has to be some how a cut off time to say enough is enough.

I argue that holding political power must be the heart of the current political struggle. The press releases, the demonstrations, the public meetings should be to educate the society by emphasizing the importance and the immediate need to hold political power. At this time, emphasizing on these activities is part of changing strategy. Without the burning desire in ones gut to hold political power and tackle the real situations that exist in Ethiopia simply talking about them is wasting time. Or, it is simply trying to perpetuate ones political life here among the Diaspora. I am quite sure these political and civic organizations will talk about the same issues for the coming fifteen to twenty years, or even more. It seemed they are molded and built for it. It appears, through time they have become addicted

to it. A culture that is affecting the Ethiopian communities all over the Continents, that is, the Diaspora. So, it is time to completely eradicate this culture.

THE RIVER THE DAM

Here I am going to focus mainly on those who are challenging the construction of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. It is extremely wise for those who are challenging Ethiopia's right to harness its natural resources, specifically Abay river(Blue Nile), in whatever way deemed applicable for its economic development, to reflect upon the history of Ethiopia. Ethiopia never hesitated to protect and defend its right and interests from external aggressors. For example, for the current presidential candidate of Egypt and his likes, to threaten Ethiopia with war demanding to suspend building the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, or else, should be reminded of the battles of 1875 and 1876 between Egypt and Ethiopia. The army of Khadiv Ismael was annihilated by Ethiopians at the battle of Gundat and Gura under the leadership of King Yohannes IV.

The political leaders of Egypt should be fully aware of the fact that the fighting spirit, the determination, and the aggressiveness of the Ethiopian people are still alive, stronger, and better. This fighting spirit is a generational phenomenon. When and if campaigned and told to come in defense of Ethiopia's interest the Ethiopian society will come forward in full force to be sacrificed. It is in its blood. Therefore, the external powers should be aware of this instilled behavior of Ethiopian people. It is amazing. What makes the Egyptian leaders to think that the Ethiopian people will fold their hands and seat idle, instead of vehemently challenging, while the Egyptian leaders threaten to go to war to protect the interests of Egyptian people? Commonsense. It is the immense responsibility of the regime to pay attention and to take seriously to whatever type of propaganda and threat being spread by the regime of Egypt. It must be prepared to challenge any possible incident in relation to the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

This is 21st century. The era where self-determination of States, members of the United Nations Organizations at that, is sacred. Ethiopia, one of the founding members of this UNO was being sabotaged, a very sophisticated sabotage at that, by a branch within the UNO regarding the Abay (Blue Nile) river. She was told to get permission from Egypt and Sudan to use its river. Ethiopia, a sovereign Nation, no more can be ignored and no more to be considered a small, black (the color that Ethiopia is proud of), and a dispensable Nation as it was done in 1929 and 1959 when the so called Blue Nile agreement was signed. The so called Blue Nile agreement of 1929 and 1959 was

deliberately done in line with just characterized behavior. Ethiopia was completely ignored. As if it did not exist. Didn't the members of the UN know about it? Yes they do. It smells fishy. Racism could be one of the factors here. Shouldn't Ethiopia has the right to renegotiate now the agreement signed in her absence, where Ethiopia was the only source of the element to be discussed and signed then?

So, it is a fact that Ethiopia did not participate and signed the 1929 and 1959 so called Blue Nile agreement. She was ignored and uninvited. Taking 1959 as an example, since 1959, in the last 55 years, things have changed diametrically. For the Egyptian government whose mode of thinking and rationalization amazingly did not change a bit since 1959, it is better for it, the Egyptian government that is, to suck it up, come to its senses and deal with the issue with the 21st Century mode of thinking and rationalization. The 1929, amazingly even the 1959, stone age type mentality have long gone.

The people of Ethiopia have changed in many important factors since 1959. Its political outlook and its political consciousness have transformed extensively. The repeated, full and enthusiastic participation in consecutively held elections is a testament to the level of its political consciousness. Even though it did not benefit from the elections. Ultimately, the Ethiopian society have reached a level to see what is hurting it and what is benefiting it. It cannot be fooled anymore. Consider the building of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) in line with this critical observance of the Ethiopian society. The Ethiopian society is lining up to build it and see its fruit as soon as possible. Contrary to the negative opinion of some of the Ethiopian Diaspora intellectuals and the opposition forces. Contrary to the international organizations who sided with Egypt. The Western governments including the government of the United States of America must stop siding with the Egyptian political leaders. In fact it is better for the United States of America to side with Ethiopia.

Regarding some of the Ethiopian intellectuals in the Diaspora who came out openly against the construction of the Dam, should have thought twice before taking such treasonous positions. They have taken a very regrettable position. Here is why it is treasonous. There is a confrontation between Ethiopia and Egypt. Between two Nations. The International organizations, both governmental and non-governmental know about it. How would an Ethiopian, the immediate witness at that, validate his/her position with the full knowledge of cause and the nature of the confrontation? The confrontation could lead to war. Are these treasonous individuals going to raise their guns against

Ethiopia in collaboration with the Egyptian government? The logical implication is as clear as that. It is very baffling. Further more, with the full knowledge of what Egypt is doing its level best to destabilize Ethiopia using religion, for example, to come up with any negative criticism against the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is to conspire with Egyptian political leaders. Hence it is a full fledged treason against the interests and aspirations of Ethiopian people. Which ever way one sliced it this is what it is. Treason against a State is a crime punishable by law. The contradictions between them and the regime shouldn't have come between them and the construction of GERD. It shouldn't have come between them and the interests of Ethiopian people. Common sense. The political leaders of Egypt never wished for the economic development of Ethiopia. Never. Don't forget what Boutros Boutros Ghalli did. Further more, one should know that it is a question of self-determination of a sovereign country; it is a question of national security; it is a question of the interests and aspirations of Ethiopian society. For Ethiopians nothing in the world should trump up these important issues. Nothing should come between Ethiopians and this God given ownership and neutralize his/her rationalization. Not even the EPRDF.

The population increase is another factor to be considered seriously in line with the building of the DAM. The population have increased to over 90 million. In 1959 when the so called Nile agreement was signed the population of Ethiopia was about 20 million. Therefore, obviously, there are a lot of mouths to feed now. Hence the urgent need of economic development. A progressive and at the same time a comprehensive economic development plan and policy are required. The poverty situation is very dire. Unless all economic developing tools available comprehensively unleashed to attack poverty, as the population is increased so does poverty. One of the available tools for alleviating poverty in Ethiopia is the harnessing of Abay (Blue Nile) river. Whether for producing hydroelectric power or for irrigation. I think it is commonsense.

Here is a extremely important point to note. When an Ethiopian speaks of Abay river (Blue Nile) it is the segment of 500 miles length inside Ethiopia with its source Lake Tana, and, with all its tributaries. It has numerous tributaries, about 28 of them. All these, the 500 mile length of Abay, its tributaries, the fauna and the flora within, and surrounding them are the property of Ethiopian people. No one has the right to any kind of claim on the 500 miles stretch of the river. To arrogantly appear to have a claim of any sort on this particular natural resources of Ethiopia is tantamount to have a claim to its mineral resources inside its territory. In fact it is simply trying to own Ethiopia itself. The basis of International law concerning the Ethiopian rivers ought to be these facts on the ground. If the

International law did not apply these facts on the ground, that is, regarding Ethiopia, then even the International law itself ought to be challenged and the matter should be renegotiated, not to be adhered to. Absolutely never give in. Hence, the logical premise for any type of negotiation and compromises, when it comes to the irrational challenge of the Egyptian political leaders, that is, if and when needed regarding directly or indirectly sharing Abay river (Blue Nile), must be based on this non contestable God given ownership. That is Abay river(the Blue Nile), particularly the 500 miles with its tributaries. If the International law neglects this inalienable right of Ethiopia to using its river then it has to be taken to the relevant international court. The bottom line of my argument is the international law that dealt with Abay river ought to be renegotiated.

FUNDING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE DAM

1. The International Organizations

It is critically important for the International Organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, to accept this Nature given ownership right of Ethiopia. The ownership right is non-negotiable. The funding organizations such as International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, including those United Nations linked Economic Development branches should consider this inalienable right to utilized ones own sources for economic development, without looking into the skin of the color and the level of economic development. The very nature of ignoring Ethiopia during the negotiation of 1929 and 1959 was simply racism. Ethiopia was treated unfairly by openly siding with the claim of Egypt on the Abay (Blue Nile) river. Particularly on the Abay river that has to do with the 500 miles segment within Ethiopia. Ethiopia was deliberately denied funding to build the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam particularly by funding International Organizations. They have to reexamine their positions and invest in this historic project.

As summarized by Minja, Seid, and Mammo, (Misplaced Opposition to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam), the International Panel of Experts (IPE) on Ethiopia reported as follows:

- (i) unlike the options of smaller dams which would have included potential irrigation projects, GERD is an energy production project and any fear of large and permanent reduction in the flow of freshwater to downstream countries is unfounded;
- (ii) the filling up of the dam is planned, to be done in stages by taking into account rainfall patterns and the catchments area;

- (iii) both the financial and social cost-benefit preliminary analysis of the project on upstream and downstream countries are favorable and the expected damages on downstream countries are not insurmountable;
- (iv) the preliminary findings about the project's side effects on Egypt is not sufficient and hence there is an information (hydrological) void, and much of the current allegations and threats are based on unfounded Egyptian fears;
- (v) work has progressed to the extent that, at the time of writing this article, the project has reached a degree of completion rate of 31% and the water diversion has been successfully carried out;
- (vi) the expected loss of water due to evaporation for the new project is not worse than what Egypt is currently losing from its environmentally unfriendly projects and poor water management (A number of analysts have indicated that Egypt has not been an efficient user of the available water. Not only is water not priced properly, but the Egyptian authorities also have allowed the expansion of water devouring crops of rice and sugar cane- against the advice of experts and bilateral donors. The irrational and increasingly thirsty nature of Egyptian use of water has failed to recognize the realities of our time: escalating shortages of water exacerbated by global warming, population pressure and life-style changes.)
- (vii) recent geological and hydrological studies have documented an abundant level of ground water in the Nile basin countries and hence downstream countries will not be thirsty if upstream countries build dams that generate electricity.

It is clear, therefore, that Egypt's no dam policy or stance against large energy producing dams in upstream countries is a misplaced opposition and therefore calls for a new thinking in Cairo.

Given the concrete, fact based, evidence provided by International Panel of Experts (IPE), the International funding organizations, both governmental and nongovernmental have no reason but to fund this life changing Dam being constructed by Ethiopian people.

2. The Ethiopian Communities Residing in the Different Continents

Ethiopia is calling the Diaspora to fully participate in the successful completion of the Dam. She is appealing to everyone, to remove the wall of the contradictions, based on the argument provided above, and, the report of the International Panel of Experts (IPE), that exists between the Diaspora and the regime. The contradiction is obstructing to see who the ultimate beneficiary of the Dam is. It is the people of Ethiopia. Particularly in reference to this Dam, taking positive step regarding GERD implies taking steps to protect and to defend Ethiopia from outside aggressors from any direction. I

strongly argue that, this Dam issue is turned into how much the spirit and determination of our for-fathers is reviving in us to stand up against any direct or indirect intrusion in the God given right of Ethiopia and its people. I think it is a measuring yard at this critical time. In addition, the failure of this Dam will not be the failure of only of the regime. It will also be the failure of the Ethiopians in Diaspora. The Ethiopian people inside Ethiopia is doing its share. Never think that it does not concern us Diasporans. It concerns us one-hundred-percent.

So, What Can the Diaspora Do?

At least three things:

1. Campaign and lobby to stand against the campaign and the lobby of Egypt. Use the article by Minga, Seid and Mammo: Misplaced Opposition to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. Simply attach a cover letter to this article and mail it to the White House, the Congress, and to all relevant International organizations including IMF and the World Bank.

2. Organize demonstrations and public meetings to educate the Ethiopian

society all over the Continents about the crux of the issue regarding the Dam. Use the article mentioned under # 1. In addition invite one or all the three Professors who organized the article to the public meetings by covering their expenses. I don't see why it cannot be done.

3. Make a generous contribution of money.

Ignore the campaign of some of the intellectuals and political organizations, who are conspiring with Egypt against the interests of Ethiopia. Conspiring against the building of the Dam siding with Egyptian political leaders is the mother of all treason. No question about it. One cannot, in good faith, especially the intellectuals, be purely against the construction of the Dam but not against any move made by the Egypt's leadership that stood against the interests of Ethiopia. It is simply shallowness. The best thing for them should have been, for the Conspirators that is, to simply shut up and say nothing. The bones of our for-fathers are rolling inside their graves. They would have not allowed any foreign aggressors to walk all over Ethiopia. It is the question of independence. It is the question of self-determination. It is not simply the construction of the Dam. So, think about it critically and deeply.

“The River Dam By Mankelklot Haile Selassie”, 18/05/2014, online at: <http://cyberethiopia.com/2013/?p=855>

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❖ Construction of Dasu Dam to begin soon: chief minister Punjab

Punjab Chief Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif has said that the construction work on Dasu Dam is being started soon, which will cost more than US \$4 billion. He expressed these views while talking to Country Director of World Bank in Pakistan, Rashid Bin Masood who met him here on Saturday, disclosed an official. It was agreed in the meeting to further promote World Bank's co-operation in ongoing development projects in various social sectors including energy.

Water resources expert of World Bank Masood Ahmad was also present on the occasion. The Chief Minister said Pakistan Muslim League-N government is taking steps rapidly to rid the country of energy crisis and work on different projects is continuing in this regard. He welcomed the assurance of World Bank for extending co-operation in construction of Dasu Dam.

According to him, World Bank's co-operation in energy, education, health, agriculture, irrigation and other social sectors is a good omen. Transparency, merit and good governance have been promoted in Punjab. The programmes of providing relief and best services to the people are continuing successfully. The resources saved under austerity policy are also being spent on public welfare. All necessary resources have been provided for early completion of energy projects.

Work on first solar project of Pakistan is continuing speedily in Bahawalpur and this project will be completed before stipulated period. Hundred-megawatt electricity will be generated by December 2014 in the first phase while a total of 1,000 megawatt electricity will be produced during one and a half years to two years through solar power projects.

The Chief Minister said Nandipur Power Project has been revived with a new spirit and round the clock work and expressed the hope that Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif will inaugurate this project during current month. He said the Punjab government has made planning to start small hydle projects at various places and a comprehensive mechanism will be evolved with the co-operation of World Bank for launching small hydle projects in Punjab.

"The projects of national importance like Dasu Dam should have been started in the country many

years ago but previous rulers paid no attention to it. The co-operation of World Bank regarding construction of big dams for overcoming energy crisis is commendable," he added. Country Director of World Bank in Pakistan, Rashid Bin Masood said World Bank would continue co-operation in energy, small hydle projects, agriculture, irrigation and education sectors. He said the pace of work on the ongoing programmes in agriculture and irrigation sectors is highly satisfactory. "The Punjab government led by Chief Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif is implementing various programmes expeditiously," he added.

"Construction of Dasu Dam to begin soon: chief minister Punjab", 18/05/2014, online at:
<http://www.brecorder.com/agriculture-a-allied/183/1183875/>

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❖ Thessaloniki to vote on water privatization

The citizens of Thessaloniki will have the opportunity to participate in a unique experiment in democracy on Sunday, when they will be invited to vote in an unofficial referendum on water privatisation while casting their ballot in the local and regional elections.

As part of the terms of the troika memorandum, in 2011 the government announced its plans to privatise Eyath, the state-managed company that provides the city's 1.5 million inhabitants with water and sanitation services. The denationalisation process is well underway and two multinational companies have made it to the second phase of the tender for the utility.

The referendum is non-binding as the law does not allow for the population to be consulted on government policy through referendums unless they are ratified by presidential decree or an enhanced majority of MPs. But those behind the plebiscite hope that the result will send a clear message that Thessalonikians want water to remain in public ownership. They cite the example of 86 cities worldwide that have successfully overturned privatisation and remunicipalised the water supply.

“Thessaloniki to vote on water privatization”, 16/05/2014, online at:

<http://www.enetenglish.gr/?i=news.en.politics&id=1936>

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❖ Water crisis lies on the horizon

Paris - The next time your throat is as dry as a bone and the Sun is beating down, take a glass of clean, cool water.

Savour it. Sip by sip.

Vital and appreciated as that water is, it will be even more precious to those who will follow you.

By the end of this century, billions are likely to be gripped by water stress and the stuff of life could be an unseen driver of conflict.

So say hydrologists who forecast that on present trends, freshwater faces a double crunch - from a population explosion, which will drive up demand for food and energy, and the impact of climate change.

"Approximately 80% of the world's population already suffers serious threats to its water security, as measured by indicators including water availability, water demand and pollution," the Nobel-winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warned in a landmark report in March.

"Climate change can alter the availability of water and therefore threaten water security."

Global demand

Already today, around 768 million people do not have access to a safe, reliable source of water and 2.5 billion do not have decent sanitation. Around a fifth of the world's aquifers are depleted.

Jump forward in your imagination to mid-century, when the world's population of about 7.2 billion is expected to swell to around 9.6 billion.

By then, global demand for water is likely to increase by a whopping 55%, according to the UN's newly published World Water Development Report.

More than 40% of the planet's population will be living in areas of "severe" water stress, many of them in the broad swathe of land that runs along north Africa, the Middle East and western South Asia.

Yet these scenarios do not take into account changes in rainfall or snowfall or glacier shrinkage caused by global warming.

As a very general rule, wet countries will get wetter and dry countries will get drier, accentuating risk of flood or drought, climate scientists warn.

But whether people will heed their alarm call is a good question.

Verbal sparring

"When seismologists talk about an area at risk from an earthquake, people generally accept what they say and refrain from building their home there," said French climatologist Herve Le Treut.

"But when it comes to drought or flood, people tend to pay less attention when the warning comes from meteorologists."

Water squabbles in the hot, arid sub-tropics have a long history. In recent years, the Tigris, Euphrates and Nile have all been the grounds for verbal sparring over who has the right to build dams, withhold or extract "blue gold" to the possible detriment of people downstream.

"There will clearly be less water available in sub-tropical countries, both as surface water and aquifer water, and this will sharpen competition for water resources," said Blanca Jimenez-Cisneros, who headed the chapter on water for the big IPCC report.

Citing a 2012 assessment by US intelligence agencies, the US State Department says: "Water is not just a human health issue, not just an economic development or environmental issue, but a peace and security issue."

Rows over water between nations tend to be resolved without bloodshed, often using international fora, said Richard Connor, who headed the UN water report.

However, "you can talk about conflict in which water is the root cause, albeit usually hidden", he said.

"It can lead to fluctuations in energy and food prices, which can in turn lead to civil unrest. In such cases, the 'conflict' may be over energy or food prices, but these are themselves related to water availability and allocation."

Efficiency options

Failing a slowdown in population growth or a swift solution to global warming, the main answers for addressing the water crunch lie in efficiency.

In some countries of the Middle East, between 15% and 60% of water disappears through leaks or evaporation even before the consumer turns the tap.

Building desalination plants on coasts in dry regions may sound tempting, "but their water can cost up to 30 times more than ordinary water," said Jimenez-Cisneros.

Efficiency options include smarter irrigation, crops that are less thirsty or drought-resilient, power stations that do not extract vast amounts of water for cooling, and consumer participation, such as flushing toilets with "grey" water, meaning used bath or shower water.

Above all, the message will be: Don't waste even a single drop.

"Water crisis lies on the horizon", 13/05/2014, online at: <http://www.news24.com/Green/News/Water-crisis-lies-on-the-horizon-20140513>

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WWW.ORSAM.ORG.TR

❖ **Bosnia, Serbia hit by worst flooding in 120 years; three die**

(Reuters) - The heaviest rains and floods in the past 120 years hit Bosnia and Serbia this week, killing three people, cutting off electricity and leaving several towns and villages isolated.

The three casualties, one of them a firefighter on a rescue mission, drowned in Serbia. The country declared a state of emergency in 18 towns and cities, including the capital, Belgrade.

Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic said on Thursday he would declare an emergency for the whole country at 1100 GMT (0700 EDT)

"This is the greatest flooding disaster ever. Not only in the past 100 years; this has never happened in Serbia's history," Vucic told a news conference. "More rain fell in one day than in four months."

In Bosnia, army helicopters evacuated dozens of people stranded in their homes in the central town of Maglaj, where the Bosna river swelled to record levels, reaching the first floors of apartment buildings.

Special police were trying to reach the northern Bosnian town of Doboş, which was cut off from the rest of the country after all major roads out were flooded.

The Bosnian government ordered the defense ministry to use troops to help thousands of civilians whose homes were engulfed by water, particularly in the central and eastern regions.

"This is the worst rainfall in Bosnia since 1894, when weather measurements started to be recorded," said Zeljko Majstorovic, a Sarajevo meteorologist. He said the rain, which began on Tuesday, would continue until the end of the week.

Many roads were deluged and towns and villages completely cut off. Schools were closed across both countries.

Serbian Energy Minister Aleksandar Antic said power supplies were cut to around 100,000 households, mostly in central Serbia.

Serbia's power company, Elektroprivreda Srbije, said it had mobilized teams to monitor the situation on the ground. Flooding had disrupted production in two [coal](#) mines supplying major thermal plants, the company said.

A major highway from Belgrade to Macedonia and Bulgaria was flooded and the traffic interrupted. The main south-bound railway line to Montenegro's port of Bar was also closed down.

Bosnia's top utility, Elektroprivreda BiH, said at least 5,000 households were without electricity in the central and eastern parts of the country.

“Bosnia, Serbia hit by worst flooding in 120 years; three die”, 15/05/2014, online at:

http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/15/us-balkans-flood-idUSKBN0DV0XI20140515?utm_source=Circle+of+Blue+WaterNews+%26+Alerts&utm_campaign=3b3ddffe4-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c1265b6ed7-3b3ddffe4-250657169

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❖ **Floods halt two Serbian hydro power plants**

(Reuters) - Serbian power utility Elektroprivreda Srbije (EPS) said on Thursday high water levels on the Morava river have forced it to halt two hydro power plants with a combined capacity of 34 megawatts.

The heaviest rains and floods in 120 years hit Serbia and Bosnia this week, killing three people, cutting off electricity and leaving several towns and villages isolated.

EPS said it has introduced emergency measures and mobilized teams to monitor the situation at its facilities. Flooding has disrupted production in two mines supplying major coal-fired power plants.

The utility's other hydro power plants are operating normally, although EPS said it had to open flood gates at its biggest hydro power plant Djerdap 1 on the Danube river.

The utility said it would do the same on the Djerdap 2 hydro plant later in the day, which would cause an increase in Danube water levels near the border with Bulgaria.

EPS acting general manager Aleksandar Obradovic said in a statement that he has ordered the EPS trading unit to prepare for the possible need for electricity imports.

Authorities in Serbia said that around 100,000 households have been cut off from power as heavy rainfall and flooding disrupted power stations, while in neighboring Bosnia more than 50,000 households suffered power cuts.

Weather services showed forecasts for the rain, which began on Tuesday, to continue through the rest of week.

“Floods halt two Serbian hydro power plants”, 15/05/2014, online at: http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/15/us-serbia-outages-idUSKBN0DV1GH20140515?utm_source=Circle+of+Blue+WaterNews+%26+Alerts&utm_campaign=5e5ec43018-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c1265b6ed7-5e5ec43018-250657169

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