



# ORSAM WATER BULLETIN

Weekly Bulletin by ORSAM Water Research Programme

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## ORSAM WATER BULLETIN

09 June – 15 June 2014

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## ❖ Extremists in Iraq now control the country's rivers

Iraq has blazed its way back onto the world's front pages in the past 48 hours, with the seemingly sudden capture of the cities of Mosul and Tikrit by an extremist group. The group seems to be targeting the region's rivers: its main geostrategic vulnerability. It now controls the upper reaches of both the Tigris and Euphrates in Iraq.

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) considers itself the true government of a region stretching from Israel to Iraq. It has been among the rebels fighting Syrian president Bashar al-Assad, and controls the territory [in eastern Syria around Deir al-Zour](#).

Despite the apparent suddenness, ISIS's assault on Iraq has been brewing for six months. Last January, ISIS started fighting its way from Syria down the Euphrates river into Iraq. In May [it captured the town of Fallujah](#), the scene of bloody fighting during the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq. This week, ISIS captured Iraq's second-largest city Mosul, on the Tigris river, then advanced down the Tigris to the town of Tikrit, and beyond it to the Shiite holy town of Samarra. Both Samarra and Fallujah are within striking distance of the capital Baghdad.

It is not clear at the time of writing whether ISIS will launch a military attack on Baghdad, or even [if it could take the heavily armed city in a pitched battle](#).

## Choke points

But it may not need to. Iraq is ancient Mesopotamia, the once-fertile floodplain of the Tigris and Euphrates that cradled the first human civilisation. The rivers remain crucial to the farming on which most Iraqis depend, [according to a report](#) by the International Centre for Agricultural Research on the Dry Areas, which was once based in Aleppo, Syria, but has now decamped to Amman in Jordan to avoid fighting.

ISIS now controls several major dams on the rivers, for instance at Haditha and Samarra. It also holds [one 30 kilometres north of Mosul](#) that was built on fragile rock and poses a risk of collapse. It holds at least 8 billion cubic metres of water. In 2003, there were fears Iraqi troops might destroy the dam to wipe out invading forces. US military engineers calculated that the resulting wave would obliterate Mosul and even hit Baghdad.

ISIS has already used water as a weapon, in a smaller way. In late April ISIS stopped flow through the relatively small Nuaimiyah dam on the Euphrates in Fallujah, [reportedly with the aim of depriving Baghdad and southern Iraq of water](#). It could also have been to [block military approaches](#) to the town.

Instead, the river backed up and poured into an irrigation canal, flooding the town of Abu Ghraib and dozens of surrounding villages over 200 square kilometres. Five people died, and 20,000 to 40,000 families fled to Baghdad. The water may have permanently damaged soils, and deprived farmers downstream of vital irrigation water at a critical time of year. Southern Iraq is mainly populated by Shiite Muslims, to whom ISIS and its Sunni allies are opposed.

## Water as a weapon of war

The militant Islamic group ISIS now has control over the flow of both of Iraq's major rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates



“Extremists in Iraq now control the country's rivers”, 12/04/2014, online at:

[http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn25722-extremists-in-iraq-now-control-the-countrys-rivers.html#.U6J\\_8vI\\_uFU](http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn25722-extremists-in-iraq-now-control-the-countrys-rivers.html#.U6J_8vI_uFU)

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## ❖ A Jihadist Group That's Too Radical For Al Qaeda Is Threatening Iraq's Water Supply

Extremists fighters from the al Qaeda offshoot the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) are now able to control, or at least seriously damage, Iraq's water supply.

Earlier today, fighters from ISIS, which was actually [expelled](#) from Al Qaeda's global network in February, [captured Mosul](#), the capital of northern Iraq and the country's second largest city. The entirety of the city is reported to be in ISIS's hands since government troops and police officers abandoned their posts before the offensive.

ISIS's control of Mosul places it in a prime position to launch an attack against the Mosul Dam, the largest in the country. The dam impedes the Tigris River, which, along with the Euphrates River, is the main source of water for the vast majority of Iraq's 32 million citizens.

ISIS has previously shown a desire to take control of dams as a means of inflicting strategic damage to southern and central Iraq.

In January 2014, ISIS [took control](#) of the Fallujah Dam along the Euphrates. The Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) was not able to retake control of the dam until April.

During their months in control of the dam, ISIS managed to block the Euphrates, flooding the area around Fallujah while cutting off water to the southern and central districts of Iraq.

Mohammad Al-Hayis, the head of the Sons of Iraq Council, a Sunni tribal movement opposed to al Qaeda, told [Asharq Al-Awsat](#) that ISIS' control of the Fallujah dam had:

... two objectives: on the one hand, they want to drown the areas surrounding Fallujah, but the sudden attack by the army foiled that plan; on the other hand, they want to cut off water supply to the central and southern governates in order to give their war a sectarian dimension.

The majority of central and southern Iraq is Shia, while ISIS is a radical Sunni group. The U.S. Embassy in Baghdad estimated that ISIS' actions in Fallujah caused a [water shortage](#) for hundreds of thousands of Iraqis.

ISIS has also previously rendered water sources undrinkable. On April 17, gunmen detonated IEDs on a oil pipeline causing a massive spill which [contaminated](#) the western half of Baghdad's water supply.

“Jihadist Group That's Too Radical For Al Qaeda Is Threatening Iraq's Water Supply”, 10/06/2014, online at:  
<http://www.businessinsider.com/al-qaeda-offshoot-now-effectively-controls-iraqs-water-supply-2014-6>

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### ❖ Iraq and the real war of ideas

The takeover Tuesday of the Iraqi city of Mosul by Sunni extremists who spilled over the Syrian border underscores the clash of world views that is underway in the whole Eastern Mediterranean, which I saw close up during my visit to Kurdistan a few days ago. And it's not what you think.

It is not the elected Iraqi government led by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki versus the Sunni extremists. Al-Maliki is a tyrant who's governed Iraq as a Shiite chauvinist, just as much as Sunni militants promote Sunni chauvinism. Both are losers. No, the real of war of ideas, the only one worth taking sides in, is the one between the religious extremists (Sunni and Shiite) and the committed environmentalists.

Both the extremists and the environmentalists believe their visions will triumph only if you imagine that the borders of Syria, Iraq, Turkey and Lebanon don't exist and you govern the region as a single political system or ecosystem.

If the extremists win — and right now they are winning — this region will become a human and ecological disaster zone. If the environmentalists win, it will be because enough people realize that if they don't learn to share this space, either they will destroy each other or Mother Nature will soon destroy them all.

While in Kurdistan, I hung out with some of the environmentalists. What an eye-opener! Their view is that the Middle East may be divided into separate states, but it can be managed today to the benefit of the most people only if one thinks of it as a single hydraulic and biological ecosystem that is increasingly threatened by natural and man-made disasters.

The real problem is water, said Azzam Alwash, president of Nature Iraq and winner of the Goldman Environmental Prize for his efforts to save the Iraqi marshes.

Water is becoming so prized that it now costs about twice as much per liter as the leaded gasoline Iraqis use in their cars.

"The majority of the world think Iraq is oil, desert and war," he explained. "My Iraq is the snow-capped mountains of Kurdistan and the majestic valleys that take the water and soils of these sacred

mountains down to southern Iraq. If we are what we eat, we Iraqis are all made from the minerals of the mountains of Kurdistan.”

The primary headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers are, indeed, in the largely Kurdish-populated mountains of eastern Turkey and Iraq. However, more droughts, diesel pumping, water needs for farms and a growing population in Turkey, plus rising demands for water by the oil industry in Iraq, have all combined to slow the flow of both great rivers across Syria and Iraq.

Turkey has built some 20 large dams and hundreds of small and medium dams to control the flow of the rivers for electricity and irrigation. The net result is that “agriculture is dying in the land where it was born,” Alwash said of the Iraqi river basin.

As for the extremists, The Financial Times recently ran a map of the Middle East titled “Fighters Without Borders,” with colored arrows showing the flow of Sunni, Shiite and Kurdish fighters back and forth across the whole region, from Lebanon, through Syria and Iraq and down to the Gulf, irrespective of borders. Indeed, the Sunni group that led the seizure of Mosul is called the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. No border.

The environmentalists think of this region without borders because only by managing it as an integrated river system and water basin can you sustainably manage its resources for the good of all. The extremists want to erase the borders because only by linking up with their compatriots in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Kurdistan and Turkey can each sect or ethnic group hope to escape being ruled by the other.

The environmentalists start with the “commons” and try to get everyone to think about what they share. The extremists start with “exclusion” and try get everyone to think about whom they fear. The Eastern Mediterranean will have a future only if the “ism” it opts for is environmentalism.

“Iraq and the real war of ideas”, 11/06/2014, online at: <http://www.miamiherald.com/2014/06/11/4172327/iraq-and-the-real-war-of-ideas.html>

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### ❖ Iran's private sector to finance transferring River Araz water to Lake Urmia

Iranian energy minister, Hamid Chitchian said that the private sector will finance the project of transferring River Araz water to Urmia Lake.

The project will be offered to private sector via tender in the future, Chitchian said, Iran's Fars news agency reported on June 15.

Meanwhile, member of the Iranian parliament's presidium Alireza Monadi said in February that the contracting companies in this project have already been determined and investments for the implementation of the project will be provided by a German company.

Commenting on the taken measures to restore the drying lake Hamid Chitchaian said that halting dam construction projects and management of water in the dam reservoirs of the lake's catchment area as well as dredging the rivers flowing into the lake are among the taken steps to save the Urmia Lake.

Chitchian underlined that extending agricultural lands in the region which annually swallow 3 billion cubic meters of water sources is the main reason behind the drying of the lake.

Lake Urmia in north-western Iran is experiencing its worst drought in many years, where over 90 percent of its area has dried up. The level has been declining since 1995.

Officials have said if the current restoration efforts are not effective, the lake will be turned into a swamp within four years.

“Iran's private sector to finance transferring River Araz water to Lake Urmia”, 15/06/2014, online at:  
<http://en.trend.az/regions/iran/2285405.html>

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❖ **Water as an instrument of war**

**ISIS terrorists are currently taking advantage of the high water levels on the Euphrates in their fight against the government in Baghdad. For its part, the Iraqi government is also resorting to inhumane methods. By Birgit Svensson in Baghdad**

Events have proved devastating. Some 60,000 people between Fallujah and Abu Ghraib have lost their homes, their harvest, their animals and their livelihood. Hundreds of thousands have fled Anbar Province. The reason is the sheer amount of water that for weeks has been making life impossible in Iraq's largest province. Large swathes of land are inundated, and the water is only slowly receding.

The chairman of the provincial council in Ramadi announced that 49 schools have been closed and exams postponed. In addition, 10,406 houses were destroyed and 80,000 "donum" of agricultural land (an Iraqi donum roughly corresponds to 2,500 square metres) has been rendered unusable.

"This is the worst flood catastrophe since the 1950s," declares Ezhar Ibrahim, a local farmer. Despite the catastrophe, he can still count himself lucky: he managed to harvest his melons in time, just before the floodwaters came. Now his fields are also under water. "What they are doing to us is a crime," he cries in despair, counting the little money that he earned from selling his melons on the roadside in Baghdad.

**Water as a means of war**

The "they" he refers to are the Iraqi government and ISIS, the Sunni terrorist organisation and offshoot of al-Qaida, which for months has been embroiled in a bitter fight with government troops and tribal leaders to gain supremacy in Anbar Province. The farmer's accusations are not without reason, as both sides have been using the flood of the Euphrates as a weapon in the conflict. Water has become an instrument of war.

Aun Abdullah, spokesman for the Ministry of Water, is certain that the floodwaters will not reach Baghdad. "We will keep the water back." Abdullah becomes furious when asked about the flood catastrophe. "This is a crime against humanity!" claims the 68-year-old Iraqi. He has been working in the field of water resources for 46 years, first in Nasiriyah, his native city in southern Iraq, and then in Basra as director of the Office for Agricultural Irrigation. Now, the Ministry of Water in Baghdad has dragged him out of retirement to help find a solution to the catastrophe in Anbar.

## **Dependant on the Euphrates**

Experts are a rare commodity in post-Saddam Iraq. During the civil war between 2006 and 2007, many experts were either killed or fled the country. In late April, terrorists belonging to ISIS closed the floodgates to a dam on the Euphrates above the city of Fallujah. In doing so, they left ten million people without water. While Baghdad gets its drinking water from the Tigris, the cities of Karbala, Najaf, Babylon, and Nasiriyah depend on the Euphrates River as their source of water.

The Sunni terrorist organisation, which for months has been conducting a growing number of attacks against the Shia population, has no qualms about resorting to any means in order to put pressure on the Shia head of government in Baghdad. Fallujah is firmly in the hands of ISIS, as is the Baghdad suburb of [Abu Ghraib](#), where the notorious prison has since been emptied, and, [since 11 June, Iraq's second city, Mosul](#).

Using water as its weapon, ISIS intended to impose a drought on the cities of Karbala and Najaf, holy sites of the Shia, thereby expanding their terrorist activities in the south. In addition, the terrorists intended to severely disrupt the parliamentary elections on 30 April. They succeeded in their goal: only a third of polling stations in Anbar Province opened due to the water-related catastrophe.

Abdullah and his colleagues in the Ministry of Water eventually made a momentous decision. They opened all of the floodgates at the dam near Haditha further north on the Euphrates. As a result, the water level rose drastically and reached the high water mark at the closed floodgates in Fallujah. The water subsequently overflowed the banks of the Euphrates, surged into the irrigation canals and forced the porous walls to burst.

## **Waves of water and refugees**

"To the north of Fallujah, there is flooding; to the south, drought," says Abdullah, who does not wish to comment on the political dimension of the decision, yet laments the deplorable conditions in the Sunni province, where the terrorists are seemingly free to come and go and to engage in lively contact with other extremist groups from Syria. "They are driving the farmers out of their houses and setting up camp there."

Government critics maintain that the flooding was specifically provoked in order to limit the movements of the ISIS terrorists and to stop their advance on Baghdad. Furthermore, according to an official close to Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, the catastrophic flooding will result in diminished support for the terrorists because without a certain level of support from the population, ISIS will not

be able to maintain its operational base in Anbar. Given the events of the past week, this does not seem to be the case.

### **The nightmare of Fallujah**

Fallujah was an American nightmare. It was here that the US troops suffered their greatest losses. Then the military struggle for the city became the litmus test for the Iraqi army, which no longer had the on-site support of the Americans.

Before the events of this week, Maliki's strategy seemed to be successful. Given the floods in "their" territory, the ISIS terrorists reopened one of the ten floodgates. Abdullah reported that his water authority was registering a flow of 200 cubic meters of water per second. In addition, between 60 and 70 cubic meters was flowing from the canals, all of which eased the situation somewhat.

He freely admits, however, that 500 cubic meters per second alone are needed to meet agricultural water requirements. "You can well imagine what this means for farmers." It will take some time before the full extent of this catastrophe becomes known. Right now, it is simply too dangerous for Abdullah and his colleagues from the Ministry of Water to travel to Anbar.

“Water as an instrument of war”, 13/06/2014, online at: <http://en.qantara.de/content/flood-disaster-in-iraq-water-as-an-instrument-of-war>

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### ❖ **Water in Gaza - what the analysts are saying**

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 (NO<sub>3</sub>) 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”, 09/06/2014, online at:

<http://www.english.globalarabnetwork.com/2014060913378/Palestine-Politics/water-in-gaza-what-the-analysts-are-saying.html>

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❖ **Gazans don't have access to clean water due to Israeli blockade**

**Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip do not have access to clean water due to Israel's blockade of the coastal enclave, Press TV reports.**

“There has been a sharp increase in pollution in recent years, as well as seawater seeping into aquifer. Around 90 percent of Gaza water is now polluted,” Ahmad Yacoubi, the director of Palestinian Water Authority, told Press TV.

The water in Gaza is contaminated with high levels of Nitrates and Chloride. The pollutants are three times higher than normal levels and are unfit for human consumption.

Israel bombed sewage treatment plants during its war on Gaza in 2009. It also prevents water and sewage treatment equipment from entering the enclave. Despite the presence of some under-developed water treatment plants, water remains polluted due to long hours of power outages as well as the lack of fuel needed to run the plants.

Gaza's sole seawater desalination plant is unable to meet the demands for fresh drinking water due to its small size and its limited capabilities.

“Seawater desalination is the only solution right now to solve the water problem. Currently, the aquifer itself is polluted and things could only get worse in coming years. We only have this desalination plant and this is not enough to provide people in Gaza with clean water,” said Ahmad Robaie, the director of Gaza Desalination Plant.

The United Nations said in a report in 2012 that Gaza's coastal aquifer may become unusable by 2016.

Gaza has been blockaded since June 2007, a situation that has caused a decline in the standards of living, unprecedented levels of unemployment, and unrelenting poverty.

“Gazans don't have access to clean water due to Israeli blockade”, 09/06/2014, online at:  
<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2014/06/09/366177/90-percent-of-gaza-water-polluted/>

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❖ 'Water issue held hostage to the detriment of the Israelis and Palestinians'

It's just a matter of time before the 1.5 million people living in Gaza have no clean water to drink, **Gideon Bromberg**, Israeli director of EcoPeace-Friends of the Earth Middle East, [told RT](#).

**RT: You're saying there must be a new agreement to replace the Oslo Accords between Israeli and the Palestinians when it comes to water. Why is the old system not working, in your view?**

**Gideon Bromberg:** The situation on the ground speaks for itself. The Oslo Accords were signed 20 years ago as an interim agreement that was supposed to be replaced after five years. Perhaps like no other issue of the final status, water simply cannot wait. The population has increased, in fact the Palestinian population has almost doubled in these last 20 years. Palestinians are not getting enough water to meet their basic needs and the treatment of sewage has not progressed. So we are seeing a lot more pollution of shared Israeli-Palestinian water. It is really a lose- lose situation at the moment, where both sides are failing to meet their urgent needs – water and pollution prevention – by sticking to the agreement that was supposed to be replaced [years ago].

**RT: Israel produces enough water on its own territory. Why do they need to produce water from the disputed territories? Surely that only antagonizes the situation?**

**GB:** The current situation is that Israel enjoys the benefit of the lion's share of the shared water. Israel enjoys the benefits of some 80 percent of shared waters between the Israelis and Palestinians, and that situation is not fair, as it leaves Palestinians with insufficient amounts of water. It means that on every roof throughout the West Bank you have a water cistern that is storing water when water is made available for the municipality, and water is not made available for the municipality in Palestinian towns and cities on the daily basis. In fact, as we approach the summer in areas like Bethlehem, Hebron they will be getting water once every two or three weeks, sometimes even once a month. That's a completely different reality within Israel, where water is available 24/7.

This current situation is due to sticking to the interim accord. Friends of the Earth Middle East are really leading the effort saying that the notion that we won't agree on anything – until we agree on everything – is really holding water and the environment as a hostage to the failure of the other issues. And that's to the detriment of the Palestinian population, plus also to the detriment of the Israeli population because the same type of the unworkable system that is in place on water supply, is also in place on the issue of sanitation. You have a lot of agreements that need to be come to, on every sewage treatment plant you have a second level of approval required when it comes to the agreement of the civil administration, at least to enormous delay, also delay in the building of sewage plants for Palestinian cities. The result will be that more raw sewage flows mostly downhill to Israel from the Palestinian populations.

It is really a lose-lose, we are really shooting the interests of the both sides in the foot by not moving forward on water. When water is indeed an issue, that is completely solvable today, much due to the Israel's leadership and desalination and treating waste water on its side so that the pie has increased dramatically. Yet we are stuck with an agreement and neither side is willing to move forward on the agreement on water, first in fear that on the Israeli side there is an idea, "What are we going to get in

exchange?”, and on the Palestinian side the idea is, “If we come to an agreement on water, then it will give legitimacy to the Israeli side and unless we have an agreement on all issues we don’t want legitimacy.” Really, water environment is being held hostage to the detriment of the public of both sides.

**RT: How much of a hold does this water issue give Israel over the Palestinians?**

**GB:** Israel has full domination. It’s like having a single bath tub and two straws drinking from it. One side, the Israeli side, can draw from that straw as much water as it wants but from the Palestinian straw there must be Israeli and Palestinian agreement for every cubic meter, for every water project to be advanced.

In fact Israel has veto power and if we were to move forward on a new agreement, if we put on the table what a new agreement could look like, Palestinians would have far more independence to extract their rightful share of water resources, but it also has the responsibility to protect the shared water body itself, something that is not being achieved for the moment.

Moving forward to a new agreement presents the opportunity of the relatively low-hanging fruit on one of the five final status issues that really can bring a tremendous gain to both sides. To the Palestinian president, moving forward on a new water agreement can really change the reality felt by every Palestinian at home because it can mean more water in every single Palestinian house. On the Israeli side it can mean removing sewage that currently pollutes streams that flow to every major city, be it Tel-Aviv, Haifa, Persheva - Palestinian sewage that flows into Israeli cities.

The failure to move forward is very much related to the mindset that is “Well, we must agree on all issues – Jerusalem, settlements, borders – or we agree on no issues.” And therefore, for 20 years we have agreed on nothing. What we are coming and saying is that we can move forward on a final agreement on water that will say water and environment issues resolved in a just manner that can help us create confidence to move forward on the other final status issue. It is not instead of moving forward on the other, but very much to correct that confidence that we can come to agreement on one of the final status issues on the effort to agree on all of the final status issues.

**RT: How serious is the current situation in Palestine?**

**GB:** The situation is serious and it is going to become even more serious, particularly with Gaza drinking water, which is particularly saline and will become even more saline. Palestinians in Gaza are extracting three times the quantity of the renewable rights of fresh water in the Gaza strip, so every year that water is becoming less and less drinkable, and it is really a matter of time before the population in Gaza will not have clean water to drink. That is one and a half million people that risk no longer having water to drink. I don’t see any border, any security fence or any military holding back one and a half million thirsty people. I hope we do not get to this situation, and therefore, our efforts are very much focused on advocating, educating the Israeli leadership, the Palestinian leadership, the international community that water [issue] must be solved today because if we don’t solve it today, if we won’t put that infrastructure in place today, then we are really in line for a dire crisis situation that I would hate to see what consequences it can lead to.

**RT: What kind of solution can you propose?**

**GB:** With climate change and an increase in precipitation and longer periods of drought, governments need to see water not only as a natural resource issue but as a security issue of national security, but also of international trans-boundary security when the resource of water is actually shared between different countries. So foreign ministries across the globe need to take much greater heat and attention to the trans-boundary nature of shared water resources. We have very much brought this issue to the attention of the Obama administration and the Secretary of State, John Kerry. Again, we turn to the American administration while we understand that the situation of negotiations is currently on pause. Water will simply not wait, and no one can afford to allow what is truly an explosive situation to transform, to continue to develop. Water cannot wait, we need and we can. The beauty of the water issue at least here, on the Mediterranean coast, where we have a large resource of seawater, we can relatively cheaply desalinate Mediterranean seawater to augment supplies, but that can't take place without an agreement, without firstly a fair sharing of natural waters, and then it can be supplemented with desalination. So there doesn't need to be a situation of "water wars." We can manage our water resources far more sustainably, far more sensibly. Water can indeed, particularly in the Middle East, where it is a scarce resource, be that low-hanging fruit that can help us move forward to build confidence, to advance the peace process as a whole.

"Water issue held hostage to the detriment of the Israelis and Palestinians", 10/06/2014, online at:  
<http://www.panorama.am/en/society/2014/06/10/gideon-bromberg/>

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### ❖ Israeli blockade exacerbating Gaza's water pollution

Gaza Strip is plunged into more trouble, as it lacks required equipment for water and sewage plants, due to years of Israel's blockade of the coastal enclave.

Over 1.8 million Gazans struggle to cope with polluted water that has been heavily contaminated with high levels of Nitrates and Chloride. Pollutants in Gaza water are three times higher than normal levels and are unfit for human consumption. Israel bombed sewage treatment plants during its war on Gaza at the turn of 2009. Now raw or partially treated sewage is dumped in the Mediterranean due to lack of treatment and mixes with underground water supply. Untreated sewage is also polluting the underground water. The situation is catastrophic and it must be addressed. Otherwise we will have a humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip.” Despite the presence of some under-developed water treatment plants, water remain polluted due to long hours of power outages as well as the lack of fuel needed to operate the plants. Gaza's sole seawater desalination plant is unable to meet the demands for fresh drinking water due its small size and its limited capabilities. According to a UN report issued in 2012, the Gaza Strip's coastal aquifer may become unusable by 2016. Experts say the quality of water in Gaza has been rapidly deteriorating in recent years due to the continuous and inhumane Israeli blockade.

“Israeli blockade exacerbating Gaza's water pollution”, 09/06/2014, online at:

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2014/06/09/366159/israeli-blockade-exacerbating-gazas-water-pollution/>

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### ❖ Councilman want to track down water loss

EAST PALESTINE -Councilman Don Elzer wants to know where 25 million gallons of water has gone.

Elzer asked the question during this week's council meeting with regards to a discussion that began at the May 27 meeting about water leaking from the village's system.

"That's the swimming pool 13 times over. That's a lot of water missing. That much water is not just disappearing," he said.

It was discovered last month the public pool at the park was leaking water and needed to be repaired, resulting in a later opening date. The pool opened at noon on Saturday.

Village Manager Pete Monteleone has said the leaks were the result of the harsh winter. The repairs cost \$4,830 and the village is seeking grant funding to buy a pool liner in the future.

According to the monthly report provided to council by Water and Wastewater Superintendent John Jurjavcic, the plant produced 25 million gallons of water for the month of May alone and only billed for 7.5 million, which actually leaves about 17.5 million gallons not accounted for.

(Water production is recorded from the first of the month to the last of the month while billing is read from the middle of the month to the middle of the next month.)

The village billed an average of 7 million to 8 million gallons between January and April, with roughly 15 million to 16 million produced during those months, showing water loss is not uncommon for the system, although it has not typically been as high.

Jurjavcic was not at the council meeting but said on Tuesday the department checks on leaks if they are reported, and he isn't aware of any major leaks or water accumulation around town.

Village officials are encouraging residents to call if they see any unusual puddles or water running along roads anywhere.

Jurjavcic said the loss has not been so drastic as to result in loss of pressure to customers or any other interruptions in the system. There were no low pressure reports for April or May, according to his report.

He added it is hard to account for all of the water because some meters are old and do not gauge properly and all of the municipal buildings don't even have meters.

Leaks are not necessarily uncommon for municipal systems, he noted.

He said he reached out to water superintendents in both Columbiana and Salem and was told Columbiana was at a 14.6 percent loss and Salem averaged about 23 percent loss each month.

Since January of this year the East Palestine water department has repaired or replaced equipment 27 times, with 11 of those instances occurring in January when freezing temperatures caused several line breaks. The department has checked on 17 reported leaks so far this year, according to the report.

In the meantime Monteleone is looking into funding for a leak detection program for the system's 28 miles of water lines.

In other business, council approved:

- Emergency resolutions excluding the approval of Salem for an alternate method of apportionment of local government funding (LGF) revenue for 2015, and approving a new alternate method of apportionment to be distributed.
- Giving a second reading to legislation authorizing Monteleone to bid and award a contract for a new water well and first readings to legislation to appropriate matching funds for the Sumner Street Bridge grant through the Columbiana County Economic Development Department, and adopting the 2015 budget.
- A resolution accepting the amounts and rates for the upcoming fiscal year.

A finance committee meeting was set for 6 p.m. before the June 23 meeting to go over the 2015 budget.

“Councilman want to track down water loss”, 12/06/2014, online at:  
<http://www.morningjournalnews.com/page/content.detail/id/550949/Councilman-want-to-track-down-water-loss.html?nav=5006>

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### ❖ Israel offers help to PM Modi for Ganga clean-up mission

**Israel has pledged Tel Aviv's support and technology for the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambitious plan of Ganga cleanup mission.**

Bating his country for having some of the best water technologies in the world,the outgoing Israeli Ambassador to India, Alon Ushpiz said his country is eager to offer technology assistance for Ganga river clean up mission .

Alon Ushpiz said, "for the purification of the holy Ganges. I have a list of 200 Israeli companies that can do this."

Israel,Denmark and global leaders in water technology and water management, say they can be part of this particular national mission.

Ushpiz said during lok Sabha campiagning, Modi was giving special preference to gaga clean up programme in Varanasi and we felt that our country is the best to help him in this national mission.

He said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi on May 16 for his resounding victory in the elections.

He also said Tel Aviv is looking forward to hosting Modi as a state guest. "We will be very happy to host Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the second time, but his first as a PM," he said.

Ushpiz expressed hope to push diplomatic relations forward in diveres areas like defence agriculture ,trade and water cleaning programme.

Already, a consortium of Danish water companies are operating in Gujarat, even conducting a pilot project for water management in Rajkot, Danish ambassador Freddy Svane said.

"Israel offers help to PM Modi for Ganga clean-up mission", 13/06/2014, online at: <http://www.sahasamay.com/world-news/676555045/israel-offers-help-to-pm-modi-for-ganga-clean-up-mission.html>

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❖ **Sisi: River Nile represents life artery which links Egypt and Ethiopia**

President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi received on Monday 9/6/2014 Ethiopian Foreign Minister Tedros Adhanom in the presence of Egypt's Foreign Minister Nabil Fahmy and the Ethiopian ambassador to Egypt.

During the meeting, Sisi underlined the deeply-rooted ties binding Egypt and Ethiopia.

Sisi emphasized the importance of the river Nile remaining a source of cooperation between the two countries.

He also stressed the need to find solutions to achieve the interests of all states and the prosperity of their peoples without harming the interests of any party.

The Ethiopian minister, for his part, affirmed that his country does not aim to affect Egypt's water share from the Nile River.

The Renaissance Dam aims to generate electricity and not consume water, he asserted.

He added that he wished that Sisi and the Ethiopian prime minister would meet during the African summit, which will be held at the end of this month in Equatorial Guinea.

He also extended an invitation to Sisi to visit Ethiopia.

“Sisi: River Nile represents life artery which links Egypt and Ethiopia”,10/06/2014, online at:  
[http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Templates/Articles/tmpArticleNews.aspx?ArtID=78300#.U6PWEv1\\_uFV](http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Templates/Articles/tmpArticleNews.aspx?ArtID=78300#.U6PWEv1_uFV)

❖ **Clean Drinking Water from the Nile for the Cities of Suez and Port Said**

VA TECH WABAG (Austria) is pleased to announce its receipt in rapid succession of two new orders from Egypt. Just prior to the beginning of this year, the Vienna-based company was able to book a contract for a new drinking water treatment plant for the city in Suez. This has now been followed by the signing of an agreement in April for the El Raswa project in Port Said. The two plants will use water from the Nile to produce 155,000 m<sup>3</sup>/d of clean drinking water for roughly 800,000 inhabitants. The customer in the case of both orders is the state-owned Suez Canal Authority (SCA). The waters of the Nile represent Egypt's most important source of fresh water. The vast majority of the population obtains its drinking water from the river, but this can only be consumed without a health risk following the appropriate treatment. At present, the city of Suez has three drinking water treatment plants, but their current capacity is no longer sufficient to meet the needs of a rapidly growing population. Therefore, the Suez Canal Authority has decided to build an additional plant and has commissioned WABAG with its design and construction. A standard, multi-stage treatment system is to be employed, which will free the Nile waters of solids such as sand and mud, as well as organic impurities, bacteria and parasites. The plant will have a capacity of 75,000 m<sup>3</sup>/d. WABAG will be responsible for the design and engineering, supply, completion and start-up of the new plant, as well as the demolition of existing structures. Commissioning will commence in 2016. The current El Raswa order in Port Said also involves a plant for the treatment of Nile water. Here, too, a conventional, multi-stage system consisting of sedimentation, filtration and disinfection is to be used. This will allow the production of 80,000m<sup>3</sup> of drinking water daily for the supply of 400,000 people. Start-up is scheduled for spring 2017. WABAG obtained both orders in the course of public tendering and in the face of fierce, international competition. The company's order intake from Egypt in the past twelve months amounts to around EUR 30 million having commenced with the receipt of



a contract for the Madinaty wastewater treatment plant in the summer of 2013. This plant will furnish Cairo's new satellite city with a system that allows sustainable water reuse. WABAG has been active in Egypt for many years and has already completed a total of twenty water and wastewater plants. The company is very familiar with the treatment of Nile water having built the first El Raswa plant in Port Said in 2007 and a further facility in the eastern Nile delta in 2009. These plants provide the safe drinking water supply of roughly one million people

“Clean Drinking Water from the Nile for the Cities of Suez and Port Said”, 10/06/2014, online at:  
[http://www.pollutionsolutions-online.com/news/water-wastewater/17/va\\_tech\\_wabag/clean\\_drinking\\_water\\_from\\_the\\_nile\\_for\\_the\\_cities\\_of\\_suez\\_and\\_port\\_said/30419/](http://www.pollutionsolutions-online.com/news/water-wastewater/17/va_tech_wabag/clean_drinking_water_from_the_nile_for_the_cities_of_suez_and_port_said/30419/)

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### ❖ Egypt's Nubians demand rights on Aswan High Dam anniversary

CAIRO — Fifty years after the course of the Nile River was diverted for the construction of the Aswan High Dam, the people of Nuba in southern Egypt are still demanding the right to return and resettle on the banks of Lake Nasser. They were displaced when the dam project flooded their lands and villages in 1964, a harsh blow to Nubian heritage and culture in Egypt.

Last month, the Egyptian government celebrated the [50th anniversary of the diversion of the Nile](#) and the start of construction on the Aswan High Dam on May 14, 1964. However, the government did not address the Nubian issue or resettle the people of Nuba on the banks of Lake Nasser, following unfulfilled promises since the era of the late Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser. The first Nubian village to be relocated was Daboud in 1963. The displacement process ended in 1964 with the diversion of the course of the Nile.

Nubian writer [Hagag Adul](#) told Al-Monitor, "The lack of any talk about the rights of Nubians during the celebrations marking the anniversary of the High Dam is a strong indicator that this issue is being ignored again."

Adul had [raised the Nubian issue](#) internationally when he spoke about racist practices and "cleansing" of Nubians in Washington in 2005. He said, "The right to return to the Nubian environment on the banks of the Nile is the basis of our demands. We were not against the construction of the High Dam, but we were against the forced displacement, and Egypt's national security [will benefit] from giving Nubians their rights."

Adul, who was a member of the 50-member committee charged with drafting the [new constitution](#), said, "We were able to achieve gains in the [new] constitution, whereby Article 236 obliged the state to return Nubian residents to their original regions within a period of 10 years. Furthermore, [Article 53](#) criminalized discrimination between citizens on the basis of race or skin color, and this was intended to address [discrimination faced by] Nubians."

There are concerns, however, that the constitutional changes may not translate to implementation on the ground.

"There are centers of power in the Egyptian state that are working against the return of Nubians, so that [the state] can economically benefit from the nature of the Nubian land on the banks of the Nile. The Nubians must restore their organizational strength in Egypt, because any right that does not have a force to protect it on the ground will be lost," Adul said.

A number of Nubian activists have created pages on [social networking sites](#) to demand that the government ensure the rights of the Nubians.

Al-Monitor spoke with Abdel Daim Azzedine, a Nubian activist living in the Nubian Nasr Center in the Aswan governorate. He said, "The government must restore talks with the Nubian youth, because if the policies of ignoring us continue, we intend to take to the streets to demand our rights."

"The state has earned billions of Egyptian pounds from the High Dam, and received electricity, water and tourism. We, however, are the only losers in this project, and what is happening with us is nothing other than attempts at ethnic cleansing," he said.

According to Nubian activists, prior to the displacement, Nubian villages covered an area of 78,000 acres on the banks of the Nile in southern Egypt. Following the construction of the High Dam, successive Egyptian governments made promises to settle Nubians in new villages, but the new locations, such as [Wadi Karkar City](#) and the Nubian Nasr Center in Aswan, were far from the Nile in desert regions and lacked any sources of livelihood. This is the reason the Nubian people are still angry.

"A large number of Nubians refused the housing that was proposed for them by the state during the era of [former President Hosni] Mubarak, because it was far away in the desert. We saw this as a kind of marginalization," said Azzedine.

"We are not seeking to secede or take up arms and violence. ... The illusion of separation is only in the imagination of the Egyptian security apparatus. But the continuation of policies of marginalization has prompted Nubian youth to resort to violence," he said.

Egyptian security leaders and the media continue to discuss [Nubian secession attempts](#) that sparked [violence between two tribes](#) — the Nubian Daboud and the Arab Banu Hilal — in [Aswan governorate](#) in April this year, leaving at least [23 people dead](#), according to official figures.

Egyptian President [Abdel Fattah al-Sisi](#), who won the presidential elections just a few days ago, had met with a [delegation of Nubian leaders](#) in Cairo on April 1 during his campaign. However, he did not promise to grant their demands to resettle on the banks of Lake Nasser.

Nubian activists did not limit their work to the right of return for Egyptian Nubians alone. They also opened communication and made calls for coordination with Nubian activists in Sudan. The latter have also been harmed by the flooding of their lands in the areas of Wadi Halfa and the Nuba Mountains by water from the High Dam and Lake Nasser.

Al-Monitor spoke with Nayef Hamid, a Nubian activist from Sudan, during his June 2 visit to Cairo. He said, "The Nubian issue in Egypt and Sudan is a single cause, and the two governments have not previously had an agreement [on matters] such as [ethnic] cleansing and marginalization against Nubians," he said.

"There are still several attempts to falsify facts and history — to erase the demographic characteristics of the Nubian people — and to force Nubians from their lands by not developing these areas, and thus making them unsuitable for residents," he said.

In Sudan, there have been a number of [movements against the construction of dams](#) after the Nubians were harmed by the building of the High Dam. There were mass popular protests in the Nuba Mountains area against the construction of the Dal and Kijbar dams, which the Sudanese government has been trying to construct since 1995. These protests left four Sudanese dead, following clashes between [protesters and state security forces](#) on June 30, 2008.

"Our message to the Sudanese government is that in the event that attempts continue to eliminate the people of Nuba and build these two dams, there will be a civil war. Yet, we still carry out peaceful opposition through raising our issue before international institutions," Hamid said.

Nubian issues in Egypt and Sudan still represent a thorny subject, considered a hidden crisis that successive governments in Egypt have tried to deal with using security measures, for fear of the demands for secession the Nubians revive from time to time.

"Egypt's Nubians demand rights on Aswan High Dam anniversary", 09/06/2014, online at: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/06/egypt-nubians-demand-rights-displacement.html#>

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### ❖ Ethiopia eyes electricity export within 4 years

Ethiopia plans to export electricity to all neighboring countries within the coming four years, an Ethiopian official said Thursday.

Speaking to Anadolu Agency, Ato Mekuria, head of the Ethiopian Power Corporation's planning department, said Ethiopia had already begun selling electricity to Djibouti and Sudan and was planning to export electricity to all neighboring countries by 2018.

Ethiopia, which currently exports 100 megawatts and 50 megawatts to Sudan and Djibouti respectively, recently signed a memorandum of understanding for power-sharing with Rwanda and Yemen.

"For the present, we are doing our technical specifications and they [Rwanda and Yemen] are doing theirs," Mekuria said. "We expect to reach agreement soon."

"So far, the agreement and the marketing are being conducted under bilateral agreements," Mekuria said. "By 2018, it will be streamlined through the East African Power Pool, which comprises 13 countries, including Egypt."

"The East Africa Power Pool (EAPP) has plans to open its headquarters here in Addis Ababa," he noted.

Established in 2005, the EAPP aims to facilitate and secure power supplies to the East Africa Region at low cost.

It also aims to coordinate power exchanges between member utilities, with the ultimate goal of establishing a regional electricity market.

"Ethiopia's plan is to export as much as 5000 megawatts of electricity in the coming 10 to 15 years," Mekuria said.

Ethiopia is planning to build a number of dams for electricity generation, including a controversial hydroelectric dam on the Nile's upper reaches, which has strained relations with Egypt.

Ethiopia says it needs the dam to generate badly-needed energy. Egypt, for its part, fears the dam will reduce its traditional share of the Nile River – its main source of water.



Addis Ababa insists the new dam will benefit downstream states Egypt and Sudan, both of which will be invited to purchase the electricity thus generated.

“Ethiopia eyes electricity export within 4 years”, 12/06/2014, online at: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/todays-news/138821/ethiopia-eyes-electricity-export-within-4-years>

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### ❖ A shared vision for the Nile Basin

The Nile is one of the great rivers of the world, feeding millions and giving birth to entire civilisations. At a length of 6695 km from the farthest source of its headwaters in the Kagera Basin in Rwanda and Burundi through Lake Victoria, to its delta in Egypt on the Mediterranean Sea, the Nile is the world's longest river. The Nile Basin is shared by the following eleven countries: Burundi, DR Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, The Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda.

Covering about 10% of Africa's land mass, it is also home to 238M people and, according to State of the River Nile Basin Report 2012, this equates to 54% of the basin countries' population.

The River Nile holds tremendous opportunities for growth, being one of the least developed rivers in the world. The basin has significant potential for clean energy (hydropower) development and power trade; for improving and expanding both irrigated and rain-fed agricultural production and for increasing water use efficiency. There is also potential for broader economic-regional integration, promotion of regional peace and security; and most important for jointly ensuring the continued existence of the River Nile for posterity through prudent and judicious utilisation.

"Nile Basin countries have been banding together for more than 45 years."

Faced with the ever-growing 21st century challenges and pressures, including massive population growth; climate change and the likelihood of extreme events (prolonged droughts and floods); as well as demands of faster economic growth, Nile Basin countries have been banding together for more than 45 years. They have been trying to tackle daunting challenges, take advantage of the tremendous opportunities for win-win outcomes and to save the River Nile, which continues to be an essential fountain of life for the Nile Basin citizens.

Nile Cooperation started with the Hydromet project in 1967, focusing on hydro meteorological survey in the lakes region. Running in parallel to Hydromet was 'Undugu' from 1983 to 1992 whose focus was on the establishment of the Nile Basin Economic Community. This was later followed by the Technical Cooperation Committee for the Promotion of Development and Environmental Protection of the Basin (TECCONILE) in 1993 among others. TECCONILE focused on technical cooperation (environmental and water quality). However, all these initiatives were beset with lack of inclusivity (there were riparian countries not represented in the effort) and above all, they did not

anchor the cooperation effort in a comprehensive institutional setting and within the ambit of a shared vision.

Cooperation started to become a reality on 22 February 1999 when nine riparian countries with significant support from the international community launched a remarkable institution, the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI). NBI was to work towards attaining their shared vision objective: 'To achieve sustainable socio-economic development through equitable utilization of, and benefit from, the common Nile Basin Water resources'.

It was formed as a transitional mechanism that will phase out when the permanent River Nile Basin Commission is established. Not only would NBI have to overcome decades of distrust and lack of confidence among riparian countries to engage in cooperative trans-boundary programmes and projects, it had to unite countries with widely different cultures, economies, water needs and water resources.

#### Nile Basin Initiative

Today, NBI is a ten-member inter-governmental partnership institution, with Eritrea participating as an observer. The highest decision and policy-making organ is the Nile Council of Ministers (Nile-COM), comprised of Ministers in charge of Water Affairs in the Member States. The Nile-COM is supported by a Technical Advisory Committee (Nile-TAC), comprised of 20 senior government officials, two from each Member State.

Day to day management is by the three centres, namely:

The Secretariat (Nile-SEC) based in Entebbe - Uganda.

The Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO) based in Addis Ababa - Ethiopia.

The Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Programme Coordination Unit (NELSAP-CU) based in Kigali - Rwanda.

The centres are responsible for implementing NBI's three core functions. Nile-SEC is the lead centre for two of the core functions, namely facilitating cooperation and water resource management.

ENTRO and NELSAP-CU are lead centres for water resource development within their sub-basins, the Eastern Nile and the Nile Equatorial Lakes sub-basins respectively.

Now in its 15th year of existence, NBI has several signature achievements realised in each of the three core functions, against a baseline of a history of conflict and lack of cooperation. At the same time, various lessons have been learned.

On the institution side, NBI has grown into a well-established and successful regional institution; with appropriate organisational structure, strong financial and operational management systems and effective program and project management procedures.

#### Facilitating cooperation

The NBI has launched, nurtured and advanced an on-going dialogue by actively providing and operating the first and only all-inclusive platform for riparian countries to discuss with trust and confidence, the joint management and development of the common Nile Basin water and related resources.

Starting virtually from scratch, NBI has built and facilitated various multi-level platforms raising awareness and promoting an informed dialogue. As a result, the Nile Basin is today witnessing observable improvement in both the extent and quality of cooperation among Member States. There is a level of inter riparian trust, confidence and a sense of shared mutuality that hardly existed before. There is now more appreciation about the fact that the Nile is a common asset of all riparian communities and countries, its fragility and the need to take care of it collectively and to preserve it for future generations. This is an historic effort.

#### Joint water resource management

A number of Nile Basin environmental assets are trans-boundary or have trans-boundary significance and require cross-border cooperation for their management and sustainable use. NBI has promoted the scientific understanding of the River Nile more than ever. It has developed and operationalized a number of water resources planning and management analytic tools. These include the Nile Basin Decision Support System (NB-DSS) developed jointly with Member States, as well as the Nile Equatorial Lakes and Eastern Nile Planning Models respectively. A suite of basin-wide policies and

strategies have been developed and adopted by NBI's governance. These policy instruments will enable the protection of key environmental assets of global significance such as wetlands while supporting efforts toward adaptation to and mitigation of the potential adverse impacts of climate change.

#### Cooperative development of the shared waters

The basin-wide platform for cooperation has created an enabling environment for joint preparation and implementation of investments, which in turn has enabled Member States to establish common values, principles and norms, without which long-term cooperation would be difficult or impossible.

In terms of investments, NBI has to date identified, prepared and/or facilitated projects worth over US\$1.3B in power, agriculture and regional trade as well as river basin management and development. The projects are aimed at bringing tangible benefits to Nile Basin citizens and distributing costs among participating countries.

"NBI has to date identified, prepared and/or facilitated projects worth over US\$1.3B in power, agriculture and regional trade"

Focusing on power projects, it is worth highlighting that hydropower is the preferred source of energy for most of the Nile Basin countries for various reasons, key among them the low production cost of electricity from hydropower options, which could make power affordable to the urban and rural poor.

According to the State of the River Nile Basin 2012, the Nile Basin with its characteristic landscape, offers huge potential for hydroelectric power generation exceeding 20GW, which largely remains untapped with existing facilities representing about 26% of potential capacity. In addition the Nile Basin remains the only region on the African continent without a functional regional power grid with very insignificant volumes of power traded among the countries. With the exception of Egypt, hydropower supply among the Nile Basin countries remains inadequate, unreliable and expensive.

The NBI led comprehensive study on Basin-Wide Power Development Options and Trade Opportunities in the Nile Basin (December 2011) indicated that the total energy demand in the Nile



Basin countries is expected to increase from 183,711GWh in 2010 to 1,170,328GWh by the year 2035, representing an increase of 300% and higher over present demand.

However if each riparian state was to pursue and implement its national hydropower infrastructure development plans without consideration of the larger river basin context, there is a risk that some of the national hydropower investments could be sub-optimal (seen regionally) and may foreclose future development opportunities.

Trans-boundary water cooperation in hydropower development and management could offer real solutions to national energy challenges if countries while preparing their power development plans take into consideration the larger river basin context. This would enable Nile riparian countries to unlock and optimise the hydropower potential and allow for a more efficient location and operation of hydropower infrastructure. Countries would then embark on constructing transmission lines and interconnectors that would greatly enhance cross border power trade, improve power reliability and affordability as well as promote regional integration.

#### Power projects facilitated by NBI

The NBI is leading efforts to transform the region's power sector in various ways: it provides a forum for joint planning and cooperative development of hydropower generation and transmission options as well as power trade among the Nile Basin countries. It does this through strengthening trans-boundary planning, coordinating the construction of the regional transmission grid and encouraging further integration of the regulatory and supervisory framework.

"The US\$470M Regional Rusumo Falls Hydroelectric project...will generate 80MW to benefit Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania."

Examples of power projects identified, prepared and/or facilitated by NBI include the Ethiopia-Sudan Transmission Interconnection which was commissioned in 2013, facilitating cross border power trading between the two countries and optimizing the utilization of existing and planned generation capacity. Others are the US\$403M Regional Transmission Interconnection project where an estimated 1500km of 220kV and 110kV transmission lines and associated sub-stations are under construction to facilitate power trade among Burundi, DR Congo, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda; as well as the soon to be implemented (first quarter of 2015) US\$470M Regional Rusumo Falls

Hydroelectric project. This project will generate 80MW to benefit Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania. Given the current power access rates of 10% in Burundi, 16% in Rwanda and 18% in Tanzania, the power generated from Rusumo will increase the access rates by 5.4% (520,000 people), 4 % (467,000 people) and 0.34% (159,000 people) respectively.

Preparation of other interconnectors is advanced with most of the studies completed and resource mobilization on-going. Cases in point are:

220kV Uganda (Nkenda)-DRC (Beni) transmission lines covering 396km.

400kV Kenya-Tanzania interconnection covering 507.5km from Isinya substation in Kenya to Singida in Tanzania via Arusha.

400kV Iringa - Mbeya interconnection covering 352km.

400kV Tanzania-Zambia interconnection covering 321km, which will interconnect the East African Power Pool and the Southern Power Pool.

Efforts to integrate South Sudan into the Nile Equatorial Lakes interconnected grid as well as a Hydropower Expansion and Regional Integration Plan into the Regional Grid is advancing well.

#### Complex process

Notwithstanding the enormous progress in trans-boundary cooperation on the Nile, the process is indeed a complex one. A number of lessons have been learned from the NBI experience, key among them are the following:

While multi-country, multi-level and multi-sectoral consultative processes are complex, lengthy and expensive requiring consistent, predictable and flexible funding, they are key to ensure relevance to country needs and ownership.

The inherent slow pace of realising joint investment projects could lead to unilateral actions and eventually affect the spirit of cooperation on the Nile and loss of the win-win benefits.

Part of the reason for the slow rate in increasing cooperation on the Nile has been the lack of regional economic integration of Member States and a lack of an overarching regional institutional arrangement under which water cooperation could take place.

Effective cooperation requires good relationships among a range of actors: national governments, civil society, communities, the private sector, academia, researchers, scientists and international actors. This allows cross-scale learning, pooling funds and expertise and informing best practices at national, regional and international level.

Commitment and ownership of the cooperative process and achievements by the riparian states and citizens of the basin is a key factor to the strength of the regional institution.

Separation of the negotiation of the legal and intuitional framework (which focused on preparation of the Cooperative Framework Agreement - CFA) and the 'development track' enabled NBI to keep on course with the latter even when the former experienced challenges of reaching consensus on some of the issues.

As NBI continues to foster cooperation on the Nile, it is worth highlighting some issues that need to be urgently addressed. Key among them is the need to mobilise funds and expedite implementation of the jointly prepared investment projects. With the majority of upstream countries embarking on rapid economic growth, delays in implementation implies delays in meeting demands of these countries' growing economies and populations. This, in turn, could lead to increasing numbers of major water resource investment projects such as dams, power plants, planned and implemented unilaterally by riparian states, ultimately affecting the sustainability of the River Nile itself.

Negotiations over the CFA came to a conclusion in 2010 with the signing of the Agreement by some Member States. To date, three Member States are yet to sign and as a result, there is the potential challenge in finding a common platform for signatory and non-signatory Member States.

All in all, it is clear that Nile cooperation under the auspices of NBI has been a huge success thus far. NBI has built strong institutions; built relationships and partnerships across all Member States; developed analytic tools, accumulated knowledge, formulated high level policies and strategies and prepared a number of investment projects. However, being in its nascent stage, the all-inclusive Nile

cooperation still requires even more commitment and momentum from Member States, Nile Basin citizens and Development Partners.

#### Fourth Nile Basin Development Forum

Stakeholder engagement in NBI is pivotal in generating public ownership, support and acceptance of the Nile Basin cooperation. The Regional Nile Basin Development Forum (NBDF), a high level event held once every two years is one of the platforms through which NBI engages stakeholders. The forum attracts policy makers, researchers, academia, business and local communities to bring forth and exchange ideas, research findings, novel practices and policies on the River Nile.

This year's forum, the fourth in a series, is scheduled to take place from 28 October to 1st November 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya under the theme: Building Sustainable Trans-boundary Cooperation in a Complex River Basin: Challenges, Lessons & Prospects.

The forum is dedicated to trans-boundary cooperation among the eleven Nile riparian countries in a river basin that is facing growing pressures in the midst of uncertain climate change impacts. The forum shall bring together diverse set of stakeholders for whom the Nile matters most and can make constructive contributions towards ensuring its sustainable management.

Individuals and organisations are welcome to get involved in this year's forum as a participant, sponsor, exhibitor, or co-convener of a session. More information is available at <http://nbdn.nilebasin.org/>

“A shared vision for the Nile Basin”, 12/06/2014, online at: <http://www.waterpowermagazine.com/features/featurea-shared-vision-for-the-nile-basin-4291594/>

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### ❖ President El-Sisi says won't allow rift with Ethiopia

Egypt's newly elected President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi said he would not allow a rift to develop between Cairo and Addis Ababa, who have been locked in a stalemate over access to the Nile water.

Ties between Egypt and Ethiopia have soured since Addis Ababa launched the construction of a controversial hydroelectric dam that Egypt fears will substantially harm its share of the Nile River, the country's main source of potable water.

However, El-Sisi unequivocally stated during his inaugural address at the Qubba Palace on Sunday evening that he would not allow friction to take place with Ethiopia.

"I won't allow the Renaissance Dam to cause a crisis or problem with sisterly Ethiopia," he said in the speech addressed to Egyptian public figures after he was sworn in as president of Egypt.

El-Sisi stressed that Egypt is keen on safeguarding Pan-Africanism which, he said, the country cannot disengage from.

Ethiopia's Foreign Minister Tedros Adhanom headed a delegation that attended a morning swearing-in ceremony at the Ittihadia Presidential Palace. Attendees included Arab royals, African leaders and dignitaries from among Egypt's western allies.

“President El-Sisi says won't allow rift with Ethiopia”, 09/06/2014, online at:  
<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/103229/Egypt/Politics-/President-ElSisi-says-wont-allow-rift-with-Ethiopi.aspx>

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### ❖ Ethiopia sees Egyptian change of heart on Nile dam

The Ethiopian Foreign Ministry said Thursday that it had noticed a shift in Egypt's stance regarding its multibillion-dollar hydroelectric dam, currently being built on the Nile's upper reaches, which Cairo has long feared would reduce its traditional share of water.

"Egyptians have begun to show willingness... to resolve the Nile water dispute through dialogue and in a spirit of cooperation and good neighborliness," Ethiopian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Dina Mufti told a weekly press briefing.

The remarks came shortly after Foreign Minister Tedros Adhanom announced that newly-inaugurated Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi would visit Ethiopia within the coming two weeks.

According to Mufti, al-Sisi will visit Ethiopia "not because he was invited, but to show his desire for amicable relations."

Mufti cited recent remarks by al-Sisi in which he voiced his readiness to visit Ethiopia "not once, but ten times" for the sake of the two nations' shared interests.

The Egyptian government has yet to confirm al-Sisi's visit to Ethiopia.

Relations between Cairo and Addis Ababa soured last year over Ethiopia's construction of a \$6.4-billion hydroelectric dam on the Blue Nile. The project has raised alarm bells in Egypt, which relies on the river for almost all of its water needs.

Water distribution among Nile Basin states has long been regulated by a colonial-era treaty – which Ethiopia says it has never acknowledged – that gives Egypt and Sudan the lion's share of river water.

During his Sunday inauguration speech, al-Sisi said he would not allow the dam's construction to adversely affect Egypt's relations with Ethiopia or other African countries – a gesture welcomed by Addis Ababa.

"Ethiopia sees Egyptian change of heart on Nile dam", 19/06/2014, online at: <http://www.worldbulletin.net/todays-news/138849/ethiopia-sees-egyptian-change-of-heart-on-nile-dam>

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❖ **Ratify UN Convention, protect water rights of upstream rivers**

BANGLADESH should ratify the 1997 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Water Courses to secure the nation's water-sharing rights from neighbours, voiced the concerned experts in a view-sharing meeting in the city on Saturday. A report carried in a national English daily on Sunday said, experts and green activists raised the demand considering that the UN Convention would enable Bangladesh to get its due share of waters in the common rivers, mostly originating in upstream India. We share the view of the experts as the UN Convention is expected to become a law on August 17 this year, containing provisions helpful for Bangladesh, which is situated at the downstream of the rivers that mostly originated in India and China. The report quoted the experts as saying that the government did not ratify the Convention due to two reasons - the foremost one is the government's subservient attitude to India and the next one is to allow powerful quarters to grab the rivers' land. The environment experts also opined that Bangladesh should have ratified the Convention much earlier to be able to take India's unilateral water withdrawals to the UN. Bangladesh is among the 106 countries that voted for the Convention adopted on May 21, 1997. Through ratifying the UN Convention, Bangladesh can at least raise the point in the international forum and put pressure on India to comply with the Convention's provisions once it turns into law. India for the sake of her own interest neither voted for the Convention nor ratified the Convention as it prohibits unilateral water withdrawals from common rivers from the upstream. Bangladesh suffers an estimated annual loss of Tk 135 billion in agricultural productivity alone due to India's unilateral water withdrawal from 54 common rivers in the upstream. Two-thirds of the country would turn into desert in the next three decades unless India's unilateral withdrawal of water from the trans-boundary rivers is stopped. Regrettably, India is neither paying any heed to Bangladesh's concerns when the Awami League government is also not willing to bring pressure on India in public nor willing to take the matter to the international forum. It is mentionable that the Water Resource Minister during BNP's regime and a caretaker government adviser understood the law's importance, but none could get the Convention ratified. This is a highly embarrassing situation and also humiliating to the rights of the people of Bangladesh. As some provisions of the Convention, including the "principle of prior notification" and "no-harm principle", require a nation to inform, and if necessary, refrain from a project if it harms the nations which share the international watercourses, Bangladesh must ratify the Convention. It is appalling that the World Bank was

financing India's controversial river linking to withdraw the waters of most of the common rivers which would leave disastrous impacts on Bangladesh. Therefore to keep the environmental hazards within boundary, Bangladesh should have grabbed the opportunity to raise the issue globally by signing the UN Convention. We hold the view that Bangladesh should not fail to notice such an opportunity to ratify the Convention to ensure water flow of all trans-boundary rivers from the Indian upstream.

“Ratify UN Convention, protect water rights of upstream rivers”, 09/06/2014, online at:

<http://thedailynewnation.com/news/14691/ratify-un-convention-protect-water-rights-of-upstream-rivers.html>

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❖ **Cong MLAs protest outside Delhi chief secretary's office demanding power and water**

NEW DELHI: Congress MLAs and scores of party workers gheraoed Delhi chief secretary SK Srivastava at his office on Monday, demanding immediate improvement in supply of power and water in the national capital.

The Congress workers, led by DPCC chief Arvinder Singh Lovely, accused the Delhi government of "total failure" in providing electricity to the people and said the issue is being handled in an "insensitive" manner.

"The Delhi government has failed miserably in supplying power and water to the people in the sweltering heat. Congress will step up the agitation if the situation does not improve. There was round-the-clock electricity supply when we were in power," said DPCC chief Spokesperson Mukesh Sharma.

Sharma said lieutenant governor Najeeb Jung has not shown any seriousness in addressing the problem of power and water.

"The chief secretary told us that he cannot do much on these two issues and asked us that we should approach the central government on this matter. Thereafter, we are not letting him go from the room," Sharma said.

Large part of Delhi continued to face long outages as the power transmission network damaged by the devastating storm on May 30 is yet to be restored fully.

Snapping power supply to shopping malls after 10pm and switching off street lights during peak hours were some of the urgent measures ordered yesterday by the lieutenant governor as temporary steps to deal with the situation.

People in many areas had a harrowing time as the power cuts ranged from one to six hours in the sweltering heat. The mercury has been hovering around 45 degrees celsius mark for the last few days.

Sharma also attacked the NDA government, saying as Delhi was under President's rule. It is responsibility of the Centre to address issues relating to the city, he said.

"Over one crore people of Delhi have been facing water and electricity scarcity these days, but nothing is being done by either the LG or the central government. Are these good days as promised by the BJP.

"We will not allow the chief secretary to go out till he doesn't give us written assurance on these two issues," Sharma said.

Appealing people to bear with the situation, the lieutenant governor had on Sunday asked citizens to come forward and help conserve energy by running their air-conditioners at 25 degrees celsius or above and take all measures at homes and offices to save electricity.

It was also decided that high mast halogen lamps in the streets, which consume more power, will be switched off during night peak hours to conserve energy.

Government establishments, including Delhi secretariat and other government offices, universities, colleges have been advised to switch off air conditioning between 3.30pm to 4.30pm to conserve power during day peak hours.

“Cong MLAs protest outside Delhi chief secretary's office demanding power and water”, 09/06/2014, online at:

[http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/Cong-MLAs-protest-outside-Delhi-chief-secretarys-office-demanding-power-and-water/articleshow/36297706.cms?utm\\_source=Circle+of+Blue+WaterNews+%26+Alerts&utm\\_campaign=418fd10c5e-RSS\\_EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_c1265b6ed7-418fd10c5e-250657169](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/Cong-MLAs-protest-outside-Delhi-chief-secretarys-office-demanding-power-and-water/articleshow/36297706.cms?utm_source=Circle+of+Blue+WaterNews+%26+Alerts&utm_campaign=418fd10c5e-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c1265b6ed7-418fd10c5e-250657169)

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