



ORSAM WATER BULLETIN

Weekly Bulletin by ORSAM Water Research Programme

Events-News-Politics-Projects-Environment-ClimateChange-Neighbourhoods-Cooperation-Disputes-Scarcity and more



ORSAM WATER BULLETIN

08 September – 14 September 2014

- ❖ Turkey's province facing acute shortage of drinking water
- ❖ Water Pipes Come to The Rescue of Droughty Region in Northwestern Turkey
- ❖ Greek Cypriots express concern over water supply to KKTC
- ❖ Most US strikes in Iraq focused on defending Mosul dam
- ❖ Iraq's Battleground Dams Are Key to Saving the Country from ISIS
- ❖ Jordan fights water poverty amid Syrian refugee influx
- ❖ New water balance calculation for the Dead Sea
- ❖ Israel offers help in Ganga cleaning Project
- ❖ Destroying Gaza's Water System
- ❖ Israel: We will grant Palestinian town water in exchange for improving settlement infrastructure
- ❖ Water crisis looming
- ❖ Lives at risk with 10,000 illegal bottled water units in Delhi
- ❖ India and Pakistan leaders lower cudgels as floods ravage Kashmir
- ❖ Water Shortages Lead to 'Tanker Mafia' in New Delhi
- ❖ Egypt faces power cuts, potential drought
- ❖ Egypt's Water Minister to Visit Ethiopia On Saturday
- ❖ Misplaced Opposition to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (1-2)
- ❖ East Africa bloc appeals to Int'l community to help drought-hit Somalia

- ❖ **Mekong river could rise 3 metres**
- ❖ **Amid drought, Texas is fuming because Mexico isn't sending the water it owes**

❖ Turkey's province facing acute shortage of drinking water

Turkey's south-western province of Yalova is facing an acute shortage of drinking water, Haber7 TV channel said Sept. 9.

Reportedly, the water in the Gokcedere Reservoir, which provides the province with drinking water, will be fully drained in three days.

At present the province is having interruptions with water supply.

Earlier, Turkish Forestry and Water Affairs Minister Veysel Eroglu said Turkey will not face drinking water shortage and the water reservoirs are filled by 50 percent.

Also Turkish Energy and Natural Resources Minister Taner Yildiz said that due to the lack of drinking water in the reservoirs, Turkey may reduce the electricity generation.

There are 313 water reservoirs and 203 small lakes, which are used as reservoirs, Turkish Forestry and Water Resources Ministry said.

The water reserves of 10 reservoirs are used by the Turkish hydro power plants in the electricity generation.

Some 47 percent of the water consumed by Turkish population is in the reservoirs.

"Turkey's province facing acute shortage of drinking water", 09/09/2014, online at:
<http://en.trend.az/world/turkey/2309712.html>

BACK TO TOP

❖ **Water Pipes Come to The Rescue of Droughty Region in Northwestern Turkey**

ISTANBUL — A pipe line that will supply additional water into the Gökçe dam from the Kurtköy stream in order to prevent frequent water cuts that occur in Yalova province due to drought, started running late on Tuesday, a solution which many think will solve the problem of water shortage in the region.

The decision to build a pipe line to supply water from the stream in question was made by the officials two months ago. Following 2-months-long efforts, the installation of a line of 7 kilometers was completed and began operating last night.

The locals hailed the opening up of the line as it is thought to reduce the water cuts if not eliminate the problem as a whole.

Climate change and wastage of water resources, particularly in irrigation, raised concerns in Turkey about a severe drought. Water levels in dams sporadically drop significantly, only to be filled again with sudden bursts of rainfall. The government reassured the public that the country and its most populated city Istanbul will not face a water shortage with measures such as additional facilities including dams and an improved network of water pipelines facilitating the transportation of water to places remote from resources or with scarcity in their reservoirs.

“Water Pipes Come to The Rescue of Droughty Region in Northwestern Turkey”, 11/09/2014, ONLINE AT:

<http://www.dailysabah.com/nation/2014/09/11/water-pipes-come-to-the-rescue-of-droughty-region-in-western-turkey>

BACK TO TOP

❖ Greek Cypriots express concern over water supply to KKTC

Turkey's project to supply water to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (KKTC) has caused concerns on the Greek side of the island, according to comments from Fotis Fotiadis, a well-known businessman based in the KKTC, a report in Greek Cypriot daily Phileleftheros has revealed.

Turkey has long been planning to provide water to the island, which lacks its own water resources. In light of this problem, Turkey recently launched a project to supply drinking and irrigation water from southern Turkey to the KKTC via a pipeline 20 meters under the Mediterranean Sea.

In a letter about the issue to Greek Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiadis, Fotiadis, who owns of a number of companies operating in several countries, described the project as a tactical plan against Greek Cyprus. Highlighting the main benefits that the northern part might gain from the project, he underlined that the agricultural areas in the Mesoria district of the island will prosper with the additional water supply, providing greater employment for Turkish Cypriots. Fotiadis called on Anastasiadis to work against the Turkish plans in cooperation with the European Union to force the Turkish government to backtrack. The businessman stated that the abundance of water will definitely be used to bolster the KKTC's position, thus threatening the political position of the Greek side in the Cyprus problem.

Cyprus has been divided between a Greek Cypriot south and a Turkish Cypriot north since 1974, when Turkey sent troops to the island to protect the island's Turkish population following a Greek-backed coup to unite Cyprus with Greece. Turkey has consistently emerged as a benefactor and protector of the KKTC since its establishment in 1974. Since then, the Greek Cypriot administration is internationally recognized as representing the entire island, while only Turkey recognizes the KKTC. The Northern Cyprus Water Supply Project, 55 percent of which has been completed, is expected to start providing fresh water to the island in a couple of months, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated in his first overseas trip after assuming the presidency on Aug. 31 of this year. The project consists of the construction of a dam and a large number of pumping stations across the pipeline.

Aside from the pre-existing Cyprus problem, there is now another issue stemming from the recent exploration of natural gas resources in the sea surrounding the island, with both sides claiming the right to exploration activity. The region where the resources were found has become a subject of

controversy in relation to the establishment of an exclusive economic zone following a deal signed by Turkey and the KKTC on Sept. 21, 2011.

An EEZ entitles the relevant government to special rights over the exploration and use of marine resources.

“Greek Cypriots express concern over water supply to KKTC”, 10/09/2014, online at:
http://www.todayszaman.com/business_greek-cypriots-express-concern-over-water-supply-to-kktc_358317.html

BACK TO TOP

❖ **Most US strikes in Iraq focused on defending Mosul dam**

The majority of US air strikes in Iraq over the past month have targeted jihadists in the country's north fighting for control of the strategic Mosul dam, Pentagon officials said Wednesday, citing a tally of the raids.

Out of 154 American bombing raids conducted since August 8 in Iraq, 91 of them were aimed at Islamic State (IS) militants threatening the Mosul dam in the country's north, US defense officials said.

The Pentagon has declined to provide details about which US aircraft have carried out the bombing in Iraq or what bases in the region they were flying out of, apart from acknowledging that F-18 fighters on an aircraft carrier in the Gulf have taken part in the operations.

But hours before President Barack Obama was due to deliver a pivotal speech laying out his plan to defeat the IS jihadists, officials released a breakdown of the bombing operations and of humanitarian air drops that were ordered in a bid to counter the advance of the militants.

The strikes around Mosul helped Iraqi and Kurdish troops retake the dam, which the IS jihadists briefly held, but fighting has raged on around the dam, with US aircraft keeping up bombing raids.

After Mosul, the most frequent targeted area has been around Arbil, where 29 air strikes were conducted against the IS extremists, said the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Seventeen of the more than 150 strikes have focused on another massive dam, near Haditha in the west, a crucial part of Iraq's infrastructure. Those raids were launched last weekend.

To help Iraqi and Kurdish forces trying to break through a siege of Yazidis on Mount Sinjar, US aircraft conducted 13 air strikes last month and carried out 28 airdrops of food and supplies.

And in Amerli, four bombing missions were undertaken last month to help Shiite Turkmen encircled there, while US planes delivered food and water.

US warplanes, including manned fighter jets and bombers as well as robotic drones, have "damaged or destroyed" 212 militant targets in the air campaign, including 162 vehicles, according to the tally. The vehicles hit included two tanks and 37 Humvees the extremists had captured from Iraqi forces.

The air attacks hit 21 militant "weapons systems," including seven anti-aircraft artillery pieces, seven homemade bombs and five "mortar positions," the officials said. And 29 IS "facilities" were damaged or destroyed, which included checkpoints, observation posts, a bunker and a command post.

There are now 1,043 US troops in Iraq, with 754 personnel devoted to security for US diplomats and 289 soldiers "advising and assisting" Iraqi security forces, the officials said.

"Most US strikes in Iraq focused on defending Mosul dam", 11/09/2014, online at:
<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/140910/most-us-strikes-iraq-focused-defending-mosul-dam>

BACK TO TOP

❖ Iraq's Battleground Dams Are Key to Saving the Country from ISIS

U.S. airstrikes prevent ISIS from seizing control of Iraq's water supply—but now the Kurds control a major dam, complicating Iraqi politics

When militants in Iraq made their recent assault on Haditha Dam, it pushed the U.S. to strike in this part of western Iraq for the first time since August. The Iraqi national army and allied Shi'ite militia have been battling the Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIS) for months in Anbar province, but until yesterday, Washington had shied away.

“The potential loss of control of the dam or a catastrophic failure of the dam—and the flooding that might result— would have threatened U.S. personnel and facilities in and around Baghdad, as well as thousands of Iraqi citizens,” Pentagon Press Secretary Rear Admiral John Kirby said in statement Sunday, justifying strikes which seem to fall just outside of the American mission's mandate

The facility, wedged in the Euphrates River, is the country's second-largest dam, and along with its big brother the Mosul Dam, on the Tigris River, it has been a strategic target of the expansionist Sunni militants. Over 95 percent of Iraq's water comes from the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, making it easy for anyone controlling those dams to put a stranglehold on the country's water.

“If these dams—Mosul and Haditha— are outside of the control of the Iraqi state, it would be a national catastrophe,” says Shirouk al-Abayachi, a member of the Iraqi parliament and previously an adviser to the Ministry of Water Resources. “This is the ultimate danger.”

Given that ISIS's stated goal is the end of the Iraqi state, to be replaced by a new, flourishing Islamic Caliphate, it's no surprise that the terrorist group has focused on the country's dams. The power to dry-out Baghdad and the Shi'ite farmlands south of the capital—along with the ability to provide water and the electricity produced by these facilities to their new subjects—could put ISIS in the driver's seat.

“Military decision makers should take into consideration that these dams are the most important strategic locations in the country,” says al-Abayachi. “They should be very well protected because they affected everything—economy, agriculture, basic human needs and security.”

For all the talk that the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 was primarily about oil, even in the early days of the offensive, significant military resources were put into controlling water and electricity facilities. In fact, this weekend wasn't the first time U.S. forces were employed to keep the Haditha Dam out of unwanted hands. In June 2003, the U.S. carried out air strikes near Haditha to allow coalition forces to seize the facility from Saddam Hussein's army. But while al-Qaeda—which essentially gave birth to ISIS—and other militant groups repeatedly targeted infrastructure in Iraq during the chaotic years that followed the invasion, none dared to attempt ISIS's blatant grab for control of these resources.

From January to April this year ISIS used its control of the Fallujah Dam to flood adjacent lands, and cut water to south and central Iraq. But the impact was nothing compared to what the militants would be able to do with control of the Mosul or Haditha Dams.

However, ISIS may not be the only group that wants strategic control over the taps in Iraq. In February, as Baghdad halted transfer payments to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Erbil, the Kurds shut off the water to Iraqi farmers from Kurdish-controlled dams.

"Let them endure a water shortage; that's their problem," Akram Ahmad Rasul, general director of dams and water storage in the KRG told the local news agency Rudaw of the farmers outside the Kurdish region.

Since then the stakes have been raised. Kurdish peshmerga fighters led the ground offensive to retake the Mosul Dam from ISIS, as Iraqi national forces had already proved they were incapable of holding the position. Now the Kurds control the dam, and amid the chaos in recent months, they have intensified their calls for complete independence from Baghdad. "If the Kurds keep control of the Mosul Dam...they will have about 80 percent of Iraq's water, which is tremendous leverage for them," says John Schnittker, who served as a U.S. advisor to the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture. "They will essentially have a vital lock on the water supply for central and southern Iraq. It just leaves the government of Iraq in a very weakened position in negotiating with the Kurds."

While the U.S. strikes seem to be the only way to keep these facilities out of the hands of ISIS militants, Schnittker said the attacks may have effects not necessarily intended by Washington. "The

Kurds are in a really strong position to leverage Baghdad,” says Schnittker. “And my real concern is that the U.S. would be kind of complicit in a Kurdish land and water grab.”

“Iraq’s Battleground Dams Are Key to Saving the Country from ISIS”, 08/09/2014, online at: <http://time.com/3303403/strikes-against-isis-in-iraq-dams/>

BACK TO TOP

❖ **Jordan fights water poverty amid Syrian refugee influx**

AMMONNEWS - Work is under way in Jordan to combat the kingdom's growing water shortage, which has been exacerbated by the influx of Syrian refugees into the country.

A new plan includes providing new water networks, replacing old ones, drilling new wells, increasing dam storage capacities, building new drinking water treatment plants and conducting a security campaign to halt the theft of water and attacks on distribution networks, said Ministry of Water and Irrigation spokesman Omar Salameh.

The ministry also will work to raise awareness among Jordanians of the need for rationalising consumption, he said.

Jordan's water sources are under great pressure amid growing demand, particularly as the country hosts around 1.4 million Syrian refugees and residents, he said.

"One of the key challenges facing the water sector is the constant influx of large numbers [of refugees] from neighbouring Syria due to the current situation there," he told Al-Shorfa. "This consequently increases the burden on water sources, which are already in sharp decline as a result of the intense pressure they are under and the drop in rainfall last season."

Salameh stressed that officials must exert every effort to meet water supply needs on a regular basis.

Under the plan, Jordan will implement 10 million dinars (\$14.1 million) worth of projects to provide new water distribution networks, replace old networks, drill new wells and increase dam storage capacity, he said.

In conjunction with this, he said, the plan provides for the "rehabilitation of several groundwater wells, particularly in the northern provinces, where the majority of Syrian refugees are concentrated", he said.

Ali Abu Samaqa resides in Jordan's north-eastern al-Mafraq province, which hosts the majority of Syrian refugees.

Due the water shortage, many have been forced "to buy water from private water cisterns because of the frequent interruption in the water supply", he told Al-Shorfa.

URGENT DEMAND

Water expert Elias Salameh said Jordan consumes about 400 million cubic metres of water per year, and that the refugees alone require between 60-70 million cubic metres per year.

This poses a major challenge, he said, urging the acceleration of projects to alleviate pressure as well as the establishment of a crisis management unit.

Drilling more groundwater wells to solve the problem may affect water quality, he said, thus it requires in-depth study prior to the implementation of any project.

In view of the current situation in the kingdom, he said, it is crucial that the public understand the need for rationalising consumption.

"Everyone is required to co-operate and reduce [water] usage, as Jordan is the fourth poorest country in the world in terms of availability of water sources," he said.

"Jordan fights water poverty amid Syrian refugee influx", 10/09/2014, online at:
http://en.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleno=26619#.VBq4ufl_tz8

BACK TO TOP

❖ New water balance calculation for the Dead Sea

The drinking water resources on the eastern, Jordanian side of the Dead Sea could decline severe as a result of climate change than those on the western, Israeli and Palestinian side. This is the conclusion reached by an international team of researchers that calculated the water flows around the Dead Sea. The natural replenishment rate of groundwater will reduce dramatically in the future if precipitation lowers as predicted, say the scientists, writing in the journal Science of the Total Environment.

Even now, the available groundwater resources in the region are not sufficient to meet the growing water requirements of the population and agriculture. If the situation worsens, it could therefore have serious social, economic and ecological consequences for the region.

Important data for water providers

A reliable inventory of existing water resources around the Dead Sea, on the border between Israel, Palestine and Jordan, forms the basis for sustainable water management. The lowest lake on earth is not only one of the biggest tourist attractions in the Middle East; more than four million people rely on the groundwater resources in its catchment basin. For a long time, the complex hydrology of this region presented major unknown factors in the local water balance equation. To some extent it still does.

Thanks to improved computer simulations, the researchers were able to work out – on an international scale for the first time – how much water actually infiltrates from rainfall and replenishes the groundwater reservoir: around 281 million cubic metres per year. This means that we now also know what the maximum withdrawal limit should be if this resource is to be managed sustainably.

A complicated puzzle with many pieces

Since the 1960s, the majority of the Dead Sea's tributaries have been dammed to capture the precious water before it disappears into the salt lake. However, this apparent salvaging of water is causing the water level of the Dead Sea to fall by around a metre per year and, with it, the surrounding groundwater levels. Fresh water springs thousands of years old are ebbing away. This much was already known. What was not clear was exactly what impact the retreating water levels have on the

quantities of usable groundwater. Over the past five years, the team of researchers from Germany, Israel, Jordan and Palestine working on the SUMAR research project therefore used a combination of comprehensive on-site measurements, remote sensing and computer modelling systems to be able to provide a fairly complete answer to this question.

Tracing the course of the water

The springs in and around the Dead Sea were identified using infra-red sensors on aircraft and satellites, as well as chemical and isotopic methods. "By analysing rare earth elements in particular we were able to trace the origin of the water and the routes it takes underground," reports Dr Christian Siebert of the Centre for Environmental Research (UFZ). "Not only were we able to locate 37 areas where groundwater flows into the Dead Sea, we now also know the history of each source.

This was important for finding out how much fresh water flows into the Dead Sea underground and is therefore no longer available to use as drinking water. The last passage in particular, before the water from the mountains reaches the lake, took us a long time," says the hydrogeologist. "Here, salt water rising from below mixes with the fresh water, and salt minerals are dissolved in it. But, together with colleagues from the Max Planck Institute in Bremen, we also managed to identify the biogeochemical processes that make permanent changes to the groundwater."

Computer models calculate the total water balance

In the end, all the available data were fed into computer models that revealed, more accurately than ever before, the situation in the drainage basin in the immediate vicinity of the Dead Sea – an area measuring roughly 7000 square kilometres. The biggest challenges were the heterogeneous distribution of urban areas and the associated gaps in the data. Whereas the number of measuring stations in and around built-up areas like Jerusalem and Amman is very high, there are broad stretches of land that are very sparsely populated and therefore have only few wells and almost no geological or meteorological data. Yet rain is particularly important in this context. The region is characterised by short, heavy downpours that often fall over a very small area. For this reason, the project team set up its own measurement stations so as to be able to measure the flash floods that result from these downpours. A comprehensive flow-measuring station was also set up on the River Jordan near one of the baptismal sites that attract thousands of Christian pilgrims every year.

Bleak forecasts

Using the models, the scientists were able, for the first time, to make predictions about possible future changes in the groundwater resources that are so vital for this region: the western (Israeli–Palestinian) side of the lake receives almost twice as much rainfall as the eastern (Jordanian) side. As a result, groundwater replenishment rates are currently around 50 per cent higher on the western side. Climate scenarios predict a decrease in annual rainfall of around 20 per cent. However, the water that currently ends up underground and replenishes these important groundwater resources would be halved. The decrease on the western Israeli–Palestinian side is expected to be around 45 per cent, whereas the water available for the Jordanian (eastern) side would fall by nearly 55 per cent. The social and economic situation could therefore worsen, in Jordan in particular.

Recycling as a way out of the water crisis

Saving and reusing water could therefore be a solution, and the UFZ researchers are developing this concept further with colleagues from Israel, Palestine and Jordan. For instance, the SMART project researched ways of stabilising water supply in the Middle East. The UFZ developed new concepts for decentralised wastewater treatment and made a significant contribution to the water master plan of Jordan, one of the world's most arid countries. Great importance was attached to adapting the wastewater treatment concept to local conditions, and to collaborating with local scientists and authorities. A special implementation office was set up in Jordan's Ministry of Water in Amman.

Ongoing research

Since completion of the SUMAR project, the research has been continued by the Helmholtz centres KIT (Karlsruhe), GFZ (Potsdam), UFZ (Halle) and local partners within the DESERVE (DEad SEA Research VEnue) project. The aim of the meteorologists, hydrogeologists, geologists and geophysicists involved in the project is to look at environmental risks, water availability and climate change as a whole, so as to develop solutions for this unique region, not only so that people will be able to continue to visit the biblical sites, but also so that the people of this region can continue to live there. A stable water supply will therefore play an important role in bringing peace to the Middle East.

Whether the region will ever build the canal intended to carry water from the Red Sea to the Dead Sea remains to be seen. Scientists like Christian Siebert are critical of the possible consequences of importing water in this way: "For instance, it is unclear whether the much lighter ocean water will mix with the Dead Sea water, which is ten times more saline, and we cannot be sure what biological and chemical processes will take place." The impacts on the surrounding groundwater are also disputed.

“New water balance calculation for the Dead Sea”, 10/09/2014, online at:
http://www.sciencecodex.com/new_water_balance_calculation_for_the_dead_sea-138018

BACK TO TOP

❖ Israel offers help in Ganga cleaning Project

Israel has expressed interest in sharing its expertise on water purification and waste water treatment under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's pet project for cleaning river Ganga.

The Centre had set a target of three years to rejuvenate the polluted holy river Ganga and has formed an integrated plan 'Namaami Gange' in this regard.

"We have already met the Union Water Resources Minister Uma Bharti and the concerned Secretary few times, we want to be involved. We offered our knowledge, technology and technical know-how (for the project)," Israel's Head of Economic and Trade Mission Yonatan Ben-Zaken said.

Speaking on sidelines of a seminar on 'Water Security & Waste Water Management', he said Israel is known for its capabilities and expertise in waste water treatment, purification and water reuse for agriculture and industry.

"We are in talks and we think that cleaning industrial pollutants from the river (Ganga) should be first priority," Yonatan said.

Emphasising on the need to make Ganga rejuvenation a mass movement, Modi had yesterday said the first priority of the Namaami Gange mission should be to prevent fresh generation of pollutants.

Modi was chairing the first high level meeting of the mission.

As many as 11 Israeli companies participated at the seminar, which was a B2B (business-to-business) interaction between Israeli and Indian companies.

The companies included Aqwise, Biopetroclean, Amiad, Ayala Aqua and Nisco.

The 25 Indian companies that were invited for the event included L&T, Punj Lloyd, IVRCL, Essar, Engineers India Ltd (EIL), Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) and National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC).

"Israel offers help in Ganga cleaning Project", 09/09/2014, online at: <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/israel-offers-help-in-ganga-cleaning-project/>

BACK TO TOP

WWW.ORSAM.ORG.TR

❖ Destroying Gaza's Water System

Palestinians in Gaza are starting to awake from the shell-shock of Israel's 51-day Ramadan Massacre which left over 2,131 Palestinians killed (of which over 500 were children), over 10,000 injured (more than half of whom are estimated to be permanently handicapped), and scores of homes and businesses demolished. Reality is bleaker than ever before. Nothing of the underlying reasons why Gaza exploded into a bloodbath has changed. Israeli and Egyptian closures of Gaza's borders remain in place. However, one product is making its way freely across the border into Israel. Actually, this product flows undetected by the almighty Israeli military and rolls right up on to the shores of Tel Aviv. The product is Palestinian shit, or more accurately, to maintain the media bias of the times, Palestinian terrorist shit.

We Palestinians have no love affair with the Israelis relaxing on the shores of Tel Aviv. Many of these Israelis have no problem being high-tech professionals in the morning, throwing on their military uniform and participating in turning Gaza into a living hell on earth in the afternoon, then going for a relaxing swim with the family on the shores of Tel Aviv in the evening. However, we would advise Israelis, and all tourists to Israel for that matter, to please stop swimming in our shit. This practice is not only unhealthy for you and your children, but it is killing us, literally and figuratively.

In a new policy brief titled, [*Drying Palestine: Israel's Systemic Water War*](#), issued by [*Al-Shabaka, the Palestinian Policy Network*](#), Muna Dajani writes from Jerusalem of the damage that consecutive Israeli military aggressions have made to Gaza's water systems:

"95% of the water that Palestinians in Gaza have been consuming for decades has been proven unfit for human consumption. Electricity shortages that have lasted for almost a decade have limited water treatment capacity and thus the availability of water to households, as well as increased the discharge of untreated wastewater into the sea. Even before the summer assault on Gaza, 90 million liters of untreated or partially treated wastewater were being dumped and continue to be dumped into the [Mediterranean] sea each day due to insufficient treatment facilities."

While the Israeli government continues to maintain a total closure on the Gaza Strip, there is no chance the electricity needed to run the water and wastewater networks will be operational anytime soon.

In her policy brief, Ms. Dajani also depicts the water war being waged in the West Bank. She notes: “According to the Palestine-based coalition, Emergency Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for Palestine (EWASH), between 2009 and 2011, 173 different pieces of water, sanitation, or hygiene infrastructure were demolished, including the confiscation of water tankers, which are used as an emergency measure when access to water is prohibited. Beyond the Israeli military’s systematic targeting of infrastructure in Area C [62% of the West Bank], residents of the illegal Jewish-only settlements have also been carrying out acts of vandalism and destruction that specifically target Palestinian water sources and frequently taking over natural springs for their own recreational use. Settlers can be seen as acting within a clear Israeli policy that sees such targeting of water resources as an acceptable method of warfare.”

The damage being done has long-term effects, as Ms. Dajani goes on to write:

“Many [Palestinian] communities depend on basic water sources such as wells, springs, and cisterns to meet domestic needs; oftentimes this infrastructure was built decades, if not millennia, earlier and is badly in need of repair. Hundreds of such communities in the West Bank suffer from deliberate damage and destruction of their water sources. Rainwater cisterns, wells, irrigation systems, and water networks built in the pre-Roman period have been targets of Israeli military forces. The effects of destroying the water infrastructure are not limited to disease, absence of basic life necessities, loss of income, or development opportunities. Over the long term, Israel’s targeting of water infrastructure also deeply influences the relationship that Palestinians have with their land. By depriving farmers of water, they drive them off their land. Denying herders access to age-old cisterns cuts off traditional livelihoods and depletes resource-rich villages of jobs, families, and traditions.”

Given the Palestinian economy today is a donor-driven economy, Ms. Dajani is correct in her below statement to point to donors in an attempt to stop this Israeli aggression on our water system. Until donor funds reverse their political tendency from acquiescence to the Israeli occupation and assume the indigenous populations’ legal rights as part of their intervention mandate, nothing will change.

“Donor intervention in the water field must go from providing temporary solutions to putting active political pressure on Israel so that its military forces cease their strategic destruction of water infrastructure. Money could then be invested in long-term development of infrastructure that would politically empower Palestinian communities at the grassroots, ensure access to clean water, and allow for the economic development of both the industrial and agricultural sectors. If Palestinians and the donor community could be assured that infrastructure was immune from Israeli attacks, the tides would turn on a policy that has left Palestinians high and dry.”

The mass majority of Jewish Israelis prefer to just ignore anything Palestinian; to them we are invisible. Ever since the founding of the state of Israel, the policy has been clear: uproot the Palestinian population using all means possible, legal and illegal, destroy Palestinian villages in an attempt to erase the crime, and rebrand anything left, like city and street names, in a policy the Israel government has long ago identified as Judaization of the country.

Sadly, this conflict will not end soon. In the meantime, Israelis, please inform your kids not to swallow the seawater.

“Destroying Gaza’s Water System”, 08/09/2014, online at: <http://www.counterpunch.org/2014/09/08/destroying-gazas-water-system/>

BACK TO TOP

❖ **Israel: We will grant Palestinian town water in exchange for improving settlement infrastructure**

Israel's Minister of National Infrastructure, Energy and Water Resources Silvan Shalom has told members of the Israeli delegation to the Israeli-Palestinian Joint Water Commission that Israel would approve establishing a water pipeline to supply the newly erected Palestinian city Rawabi, in the central West Bank, only if the Palestinians agree to allow Israel to update the settlements' water infrastructure.

Israel's *Maariv* newspaper, which reported the news on its website, said that Shalom responded to appeals from the settlements' representatives by saying he will not allow the Palestinians to provide their new city with water while they stifle the Israeli settlements.

Sources close to Shalom, who is the first Israeli minister to intervene in the topic amid several appeals by settlers to Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Moshe Ya'alon said that "he maintains his position that there will be no water for Rawabi without strengthening the settlements' infrastructure in the West Bank".

The Israeli-Palestinian Joint Water Committee, which was established under the Oslo agreement, provides that each party has the right to veto any project related to any of the topics left for future talks between the two parties.

In recent years, Palestinians have refused to approve some of the settlements' developmental projects while Israel in turn vetoed projects for the Palestinians.

Israel's Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories Yoav Mordechai proposed a solution to the dilemma by replacing the Palestinian representative to the committee which has been recently made. Under the new agreement, Israel has agreed to allow providing the city of Rawabi with water in exchange for the Palestinians' approval of two infrastructural projects to the settlements, including establishing a water pipeline to supply the settlement of Ofra that can also be used by the city of Rawabi.

“Israel: We will grant Palestinian town water in exchange for improving settlement infrastructure”, 11/09/2014, online at: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/europe/14071-israel-we-will-grant-palestinian-town-water-in-exchange-for-improving-settlement-infrastructure>

BACK TO TOP

WWW.ORSAM.ORG.TR

❖ Water crisis looming

The Kingdom will face a severe water shortage in the future because of poor rainfall in recent years and high consumption rates, according to local experts.

Abdulaziz Al-Turbaq, a researcher and expert in water science, said Saudi Arabia consists largely of desert areas with no rivers or huge natural water resources except underground water that is a nonrenewable source.

“It is necessary to find an urgent solution to the looming water crisis by developing strategic plans for rational use of water over the long term and providing large quantities of clean water at a low cost,” said Al-Turbaq.

“Unfortunately, water was wasted and aquifers were depleted in huge quantities over the past four decades, which has placed some areas in a critical condition. Water desalination projects initiated in the Kingdom four decades ago to provide drinking water is a fundamental solution, but is very expensive and will provide insufficient amount of water in light of the steady increase in the population. Also, standards of living have improved to such an extent that consumption rates per individual are increasing dramatically. In some areas in the Kingdom, individuals consume 500 liters a day.”

Al-Turbaq said that the agricultural sector consumes excessive amounts of water to produce low-value crops such as feed, grain and dates. He said that these products use 80 to 85 percent of the water in the agricultural sector and are not economically viable.

Omar Al-Ayoubi, a specialist in water research, said that industrialization, particularly in manufacturing, had taken place without considering threats to the environment and water security. Many of these heavy industries require huge amounts of water for cooling processes.

“Urgent action is needed. It must be borne in mind that water is a nonrenewable source that should be protected,” he said.

“Water crisis looming”, 09/09/2014, online at: <http://www.arabnews.com/saudi-arabia/news/627506>

BACK TO TOP

WWW.ORSAM.ORG.TR

❖ **Lives at risk with 10,000 illegal bottled water units in Delhi**

NEW DELHI: More than 10,000 illegal packaged water bottling units are operating in the National Capital Territory, often using the labels of the 64 licensed manufacturers, putting the health of millions of people at risk, officials maintain.

"It may sound horrific but only 64 water bottling plants have the licence to supply packed drinking water in the national capital and the NCR," said Pankaj Aggarwal, the president of the Bottled Water Processors Association.

"It's a big reason for worry. Despite not getting clearances from the Bureau of Indian Standard (BIS), supplies from such unlicensed plants is equal to the quantity of bottles supplied by the licensed plants," Aggarwal told IANS.

"Such illegal units are mostly located in slums and congested bylanes of Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. They hardly meet the standards of water purification, but escape getting checked by government officials due to their location."

In a recent case, cockroaches were found in water drums supplied to the headquarters of the East Delhi Municipal Corp. After a probe, the supplier was found to be an illegal operator. But the unit could not be traced as there no record with the association.

In another, a house fly was found in water supplied to a media organisation in Noida.

"If the condition of Delhi is like this, then what will be the situation in the other parts of the country. But I do not have any official data on it," Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said.

"It is the duty of the Delhi government to submit data of such unlicensed operators to the central government. Only when we receive such a report can we frame more stringent policies to stop such malpractices," Vardhan told IANS.

North Delhi Municipal Corp Mayor Yogender Chandolia gave IANS some alarming data. "I believe

the number of unlicensed bottling units in Delhi is more over 10,000. There's a shortage of drinking water in many parts. Operating illegal units is an easy business," he said.

"We did a survey this year and over 2,000 people were caught running unlicensed water bottling plants in parts of North Delhi alone. But no action was taken against them. This has again given them the freedom to keep running their illegal business."

In fact, the Delhi High Court asked the government agencies in May 2010 to crack down on bottling units selling water without a licence and a proper certification from the BIS. But that hasn't helped, bona fide bottlers lament.

Aggarwal said every registered water bottling unit has to set up a lab for testing the presence of chemicals and microbes. These reports have to be submitted to the Bureau of Indian Standards every week. They also have to give water samples to a government lab.

"But such tests are conducted only on the licensed plants. The unlicensed plants do not have to undergo any such test. They operate easily -- even without proper water purification equipment," he said.

Each unit has to pay an annual fee of Rs.1 lakh.

"The point to be noted is that while licensed water bottling plants sell around 10,000 of water bottles every day, the unlicensed bottling plants manage to sell 30,000-40,000 bottles every day."

The association said the past two years particularly have seen a spurt in illegal bottled water suppliers. They mostly operate from areas like Arjun Nagar, Dwarka and Jamia Nagar. These areas account for 50 percent of such units operating in tiny rooms and hutments.

"Being outside the ambit of our association, none of the stringent government norms apply to them nor do they pay any of the taxes," Rakesh Kumar Suri, owner of Diamond Dew, a licensed water bottling plant in Noida, told IANS.

He said besides the poor quality of water they supply these unlicensed operators also evade the 15 percent sales tax which is mandatory. "They also don't get any electricity bills because of the way they operate in isolated locations," he said.

The water resources ministry in its latest order has asked all water bottling plants to get new licences to pump out ground water. However, the costs for this is yet to be announced.

"The new order is again going to apply only to the licensed plants. Such policies are creating impediments in the smooth operations of licensed units," Pradeep Kumar, owner of Ocean Blue, a licensed water bottling plant in Arjun Nagar, told IANS.

He said the minimum cost of a plant is between Rs.2-3 crore, besides high taxes.

"There can be no solution until the government raids such unlicensed plants and stops unlicensed owners from supplying unpurified water and putting the life of people in jeopardy."

"Lives at risk with 10,000 illegal bottled water units in Delhi", 07/09/2014, online at:
http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/City/Delhi/Lives-at-risk-with-10000-illegal-bottled-water-units-in-Delhi/articleshow/41946231.cms?utm_source=Circle+of+Blue+WaterNews+%26+Alerts&utm_campaign=83ebf43d2c-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c1265b6ed7-83ebf43d2c-250657169

BACK TO TOP

❖ India and Pakistan leaders lower cudgels as floods ravage Kashmir

(Reuters) - The prime ministers of [India](#) and [Pakistan](#) have offered to help each other in efforts to alleviate flood havoc in the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir, lowering tension between the rival nations after weeks of army clashes and heated rhetoric.

Kashmir is divided by one of the world's deadliest and most heavily militarised borders. Both the Indian and Pakistani sides have been ravaged by floods that have killed at least 239 people as rivers burst their [banks](#) after heavy rain.

The disaster, which left large parts of Srinagar, the capital of Indian-administered Kashmir, deep in water, comes weeks after Prime Minister Narendra Modi canceled high-level peace talks and accused [Pakistan](#) of fighting a "proxy war".

The Hindu nationalist leader's tone was more conciliatory in a letter to his Pakistani counterpart on Sunday.

"It is a matter of great distress that the retreating monsoon rains have played havoc in many parts of our two countries," Modi wrote to Nawaz Sharif, according to excerpts released by his office.

"In this hour of need, I offer any assistance that you may need in the relief efforts that will be undertaken by the government of Pakistan. Our resources are at your disposal."

Pakistan's foreign ministry reciprocated, saying the government was "ready to help in whatever way possible to mitigate the suffering of the people affected by the floods" in Indian-controlled Kashmir.

It is unlikely either side will accept the other's offer of help, given the military sensitivities in the region, where hundreds of thousands of troops have faced off for decades.

Both prime ministers flew over their respective areas of Kashmir on Sunday to review the extent to the flooding.

At least 175 people have been killed by flash floods and landslides on the Indian side of the de facto border, while Pakistan's Kashmir State Disaster Management Authority said 64 deaths had so far been reported.

"Most deaths have been caused by houses collapsing, landslides and incidents of drowning," said Akram Sohail, the head of the organization. "Over 29,406 people have been affected in around 120 villages."

When he took office in May, Modi invited Sharif to Delhi in an unprecedented gesture that raised hopes of progress to resolve the nuclear armed countries' differences over Kashmir.

The mainly Muslim region, known for its natural beauty, was divided soon after independence from British rule and partition in 1947 created the separate states of [India](#) and Pakistan.

The two nations have fought three wars and came close to a fourth in 2001. Sometimes fatal skirmishes between the two armies are common along the Line of Control, as the de facto border is known.

In an apparent bid to thaw ties again, Pakistan last week sent 15 boxes of mangoes to Modi.

"They were delivered to the prime minister's office on Wednesday last week," said a spokesman for the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi. "He must have eaten some of them by now."

"India and Pakistan leaders lower cudgels as floods ravage Kashmir", 08/09/2014, online at:

http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/09/08/us-southasia-floods-idUSKBN0H30NE20140908?utm_source=Circle+of+Blue+WaterNews+%26+Alerts&utm_campaign=83ebf43d2c-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c1265b6ed7-83ebf43d2c-250657169

BACK TO TOP

WWW.ORSAM.ORG.TR

❖ **Water Shortages Lead to 'Tanker Mafia' in New Delhi**

NEW DELHI: Every summer, when Minoo Phakey's water runs out, she does what most people do in her middle-class neighborhood: she calls the mafia.

Within an hour, a man in a tanker arrives, carrying a load of dubious water drawn illegally from the city's groundwater. With India's capital gripped by its annual hot season water shortage, the city's so-called tanker mafia is doing a roaring trade. An estimated 2,000 illegal tankers ply New Delhi's roads every day, lifelines to millions whose taps have run dry, and symptoms of a much bigger problem - the city's desperately dysfunctional water system.

The tankers don't come cheap. But some Delhi-ites have no choice.

"You need water, you will pay anything, right?" says Phakey, a marketing executive.

She is hardly alone. In a city known for its vertiginous inequalities, the shortage affects people from both upscale gated communities and dust-blown slums, as every day, the city's supply falls more than 160 million gallons short.

Most residents have piped water for just a couple hours a day, and almost a quarter have none at all. With a leaky water infrastructure long overwhelmed by new arrivals, New Delhi is grappling with a dizzying social and environmental challenge, worsened by chaotic management. For many, it is a distressing reminder of a daily reality that lags behind India's superpower dreams.

While New Delhi has had water troubles for decades, the shortage has become critical in recent years as the city's population has grown with little or no planning, rising from 9 million in 1991 to almost 17 million today.

Even many of the wealthiest neighborhoods get water for just an hour in the morning, with residents rushing to turn on pumps and fill storage tanks when the municipal supply flows.

The most urgent problem, though, is getting water to the sprawling neighborhoods of illegally

constructed buildings, home to 40 percent of the city's residents and largely without water lines. The city's water agency, the Delhi Jal Board, sends 900 tankers onto the crowded roads every day. In some neighborhoods, a tanker passes every few minutes, its load sloshing down its sides.

But it's nowhere near enough. Tankers usually stop for just 15 minutes, while dozens of people crowd around waving buckets and plastic tubes. Tempers flare in the fierce heat; fights are frequent. In some areas, people get just 3 liters (quarts).

In a slum in Vasant Kunj, a young woman, Fatima, keeps her entire week's supply in five 50-liter (13-gallon) plastic containers lined up next to her bed. They take up a third of the 3.5-meter (12-foot) metal box where she, her husband and child live.

"Sometimes only one water tanker comes, sometimes they come after a day's gap," says Fatima, who uses only one name. "We are poor people. If we sit and wait like this for a whole day for the water tanker, when will we go out to earn our daily wage?"

New Delhi's water authority downplays the problem.

"I wouldn't call it a crisis," says Vijay Kumar, the agency's chief. "If you look at Delhi overall, certain pockets are water-scarce - not all."

Those pockets, though, are home to roughly 3.5 million people.

The water board says it doesn't have enough water and largely blames neighboring states, which it says failed to deliver extra water to the city after a 2012 canal renovation.

"That is our biggest constraint," says Kumar. "Once we are in position to commission the entire infrastructure, water will be more equitably distributed, more rationally managed. But what is crucial is that we should get more water."

Still, critics say the city - which is close to two major rivers and has a significant water table -

shouldn't be running short. In theory, as the World Bank noted, New Delhi should have more water available per capita than Paris.

Instead, critics say, the water board has squandered its resources.

"Delhi is a very privileged city in terms of water availability. So Delhi seems to be a case of crisis of mismanagement," says Himanshu Thakkar, who runs the New Delhi-based South Asian Network for Dams, Rivers and People, a research and environmentalist organization.

Insiders agree. A 2013 government audit of the water board depicted a system verging on collapse, with projects launched and then halted after years of delays, quality control labs understaffed, and most plants constantly leaking. One plant hadn't been repaired in 57 years.

Management failures mean New Delhi wastes the water it has, distributing it unevenly and, by its own admission, losing 40 percent of its supply a day. Some neighborhoods get more water than they can use while others go dry. Despite repeated audits acknowledging the problems, little has been done to address them.

Often, the board ignores many of the real reasons behind the shortage.

For instance, while the board blames leakage for most lost water, experts say more is actually stolen. Sanjay Sharma, a water engineer with the activist group Citizens Front for Water Democracy, says tens of thousands of builders and homeowners have illegally tapped into the city's water mains.

They don't have many other options. With no reliable supply, illegal connections and calls to the water mafia have become routine. Aware they can offer no alternative, authorities largely tolerate it. In any case, the water board only manages to collect water charges on half its authorized connections.

Ramanand Sharma, who runs a small illegal tanker business in southern New Delhi, fills his tankers from illegal wells outside the city, paying off police patrols with \$3 bribes. Government tanker drivers also often divert their loads for cash, he says.

"The government water tankers are not under scrutiny," he says. "Everyone knows that they make money, too."

Sharma charges 3,000 rupees, or about \$50, for a thousand liters, impossibly expensive for most Indians. Other suppliers charge 600 rupees, or around \$10, per trip, but that's still beyond most people.

Instead, hundreds of thousands of families dig pumps directly into the increasingly polluted groundwater, paying around 15,000 rupees, or \$250, for installation. That has prompted a precipitous drop in the water table in many areas: In several parts of southern New Delhi, water has been receding by up to 9 feet (2.75 meters) a year, threatening environmental and human disaster.

"There are predictions by the central groundwater authorities that, in decades and not more, some of these areas will be completely devoid of any usable groundwater," says Mr Thakkar, of the New Delhi environmental group.

There are signs of progress. New Delhi's government is completing a massive drainage project, which it says will cut river pollution by almost two-thirds, allowing more water to be pumped from the Yamuna River. A system of underground reservoirs is being constructed to distribute water more equally.

The water board is also experimenting with smaller projects, including pay-per-use water dispensers. Known as "water ATMs," the solar-powered machines offer treated water for a nominal sum in unpiped areas. Five hundred ATMs are to be installed in 10 slums in the next year.

But such projects promise little for the millions in the unauthorized slums where no pipelines are planned.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power promising to bring efficiency to the country's chaotic public services, including water. Expectations that the new government would prioritize basic

necessities were high.

But three months after his election, his government has yet to set a target date to bring piped water to all New Delhi's citizens.

"Just 10 kilometers from his office there is the area that has no piped network. In the capital city of India!" says Sanjay Sharma, the water engineer. "Where is the commitment?"

"Water Shortages Lead to 'Tanker Mafia' in New Delhi", 08/09/2014, online at: http://www.ndtv.com/article/cities/water-shortages-lead-to-tanker-mafia-in-new-delhi-588479?utm_source=Circle+of+Blue+WaterNews+%26+Alerts&utm_campaign=83ebf43d2c-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c1265b6ed7-83ebf43d2c-250657169

BACK TO TOP

❖ Egypt faces power cuts, potential drought

CAIRO — Despite the need to store extra water from this year's floods to activate the [Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam](#) in September 2015, the Egyptian government had to discharge extra amounts of water — other than the amount that is released from the Aswan Dam on a daily basis — to generate more hydroelectric power to solve the power cut crises. The Renaissance Dam, on the Blue Nile River in Ethiopia, is expected to become the largest hydroelectric power plant in Africa and will have direct consequences on Egypt and Sudan.

According to Hossam el-Moghazy, the Egyptian minister of water resources and irrigation, the Aswan Dam committee has discharged 10 million cubic meters (353 million cubic feet) from the Nile per day, for 10 days, to produce more [hydroelectric energy](#).

In a news conference organized by the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, Moghazy said that the emission of this amount of water from storage in Lake Nasser, which is considered strategic, occurred at a time when Egypt is struggling with drought and in terrible need to store every possible drop. “This is the cost of the terrorist acts committed by the extremist groups that bombed and destroyed electricity stations and towers, which led to long power cuts and the disruption of indispensable facilities,” Moghazy explained.

“We are sorry, but there was an electricity crisis. The emission of extra water for 10 days helped in solving this crisis by contributing to the production of hydroelectric power. There was significant improvement and the officials in the Ministry of Electricity overcame the crisis,” Moghazy said.

In a phone interview with Al-Monitor, former Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation Mohamed Nasr Eldin Allam criticized the government for wasting such amounts of water from the vital storage point in Lake Nasser, while the country is on the verge of a water crisis in the coming year, in addition to the scheduled activation of the first phase of the Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

“When I was minister of irrigation, I prevented using the water of floodings to [cleanse the Nile](#) in addition to preventing any drop from the Nile from reaching the Mediterranean, despite its

importance," Allam said. "All of this was to preserve every drop of water in anticipation of droughts, so Egyptians would never be thirsty.

“As minister of irrigation, I had to discharge certain amounts of water from Lake Nasser to solve urgent electricity crises. However, this would be done according to certain restrictions by storing the discharged water behind al-Qanater, Esna, Nag Hammadi and Asyut along the Nile, to reuse the water after having solved an electricity crisis, with the purpose of preserving the Lake Nasser storage. This is why the government is not doing the right thing right now.”

The scheduled activation of the Egyptian Renaissance Dam in September 2015 requires Egypt to store enough water from current flooding to avoid a severe water crisis. The first phase of the activation will have a major effect on electricity shortages at the Aswan Dam and it would be difficult to activate a number of its stations.

Mohamed Abdel Aty, former head of Nile water at the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, revealed this in an interview with Al-Monitor. He also confirmed the inevitability of Egypt heading toward serious negotiations with the Ethiopian government to pursue the electricity-linkage project between the two countries and Sudan.

Abdel Aty said that this [electricity-linkage project](#) between Egypt and Ethiopia, in partnership with Sudan, will be much more important for Ethiopians since Ethiopia would be able to benefit from Egypt’s power-generating stations during the Nile’s drought period, while Egypt would be able to use the electricity surplus from the Ethiopian Reconnaissance Dam.

When asked about his opinion concerning the current amount of water discharged from the Aswan Dam to solve the electricity crisis, Abdel Aty explained that the purpose of this was not limited to increasing hydroelectric power generation, but it was also to cleanse the Nile from pollution. This cleanse also included the highly polluted Rosetta and Damietta branch rivers since the ministry stopped water emission to reduce pollution years ago, because of the water shortage.

“The Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation and the Aswan Dam committee are capable of returning this amount of water back to Lake Nasser in the next month by reducing the daily discharge and storing larger amounts from flooding into the lake,” Abdel Aty said.

Haitham Awad, a professor of irrigation engineering and water hydraulics at the University of Alexandria, spoke to Al-Monitor concerning the Egyptian-Ethiopian electricity-linkage project. “The electricity-linkage project with Ethiopia will be beneficial for both parties. According to published studies, the power to activate the Renaissance Dam is for less than six hours per day and its efficiency is less than 30%,” Awad said. “This is why Ethiopia needs alternative energy, which is available in Egypt since the country only relies on the hydroelectric power from the Aswan Dam 10% [of the time], while 90% of the time it uses thermal stations to generate electricity.

“Electricity exchange between the two countries is highly possible. The Renaissance Dam covers the electricity shortage in Egypt during rush hours, while Ethiopia regains electricity during the dam’s pause and during drought periods when there is no water to activate the dam,” Awad said.

Cairo is facing an electricity shortage, and its power cuts are lasting longer. The solutions for this crisis might result in more dangerous problems in the future. Egyptians will suffer darkness and drought in case there are no serious procedures to face the crisis of activating the Ethiopian Renaissance Dam and the water shortage it could cause in Egypt. This would eventually lead to a deficiency in the Aswan Dam’s electricity production, the first phase of which would reach 14 billion cubic meters (494 billion cubic feet) of water from the Nile, to be stored in the new dam in September, ultimately reaching 74 billion cubic meters (2,613 billion cubic feet) by the time the Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is fully activated.

“Egypt faces power cuts, potential drought”, 09/09/2014, online at: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/09/egypt-water-nile-shortage-power-cuts.html#>

BACK TO TOP

❖ Egypt's Water Minister to Visit Ethiopia On Saturday

Cairo — Egypt's Water and Irrigation Minister Hossam Moghazi said he will visit Ethiopia on Saturday to launch the Tripartite National Committee's first meeting.

The committee is made up of 12 water experts from Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan to conduct a special study on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD).

Egypt's relationship with Ethiopia has been tense since the latter announced the start of the dam building process in May, 2013.

Egypt believes the dam would negatively affect its share of the Nile water. The hydroelectric dam is being built on the Blue Nile, which provides Egypt with 85 percent of its Nile water share.

During his three-day visit to Ethiopia, Moghazi is expected to visit the dam's construction site, reported state-run news agency MENA.

Egypt's, Sudan's and Ethiopia's water ministers agreed on the formation of the Tripartite National Committee during the fourth round of tripartite talks over the building of the dam in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum on August 25 and 26.

The committee, which is set to resort to international advisory companies, will produce a detailed study on the dam's effect on the flow of the Nile's water as well as the project's environmental, economic and social effects on Egypt and Sudan. It should conclude its report within six months, by March, and its results are to be binding for all.

The three Nile Basin countries had formed an expert committee to provide an advisory opinion over the building process and the harms it might cause. The committee included four international experts in addition to two experts from each of the three countries.

During the Khartoum tripartite talks, Moghazi said that there is a need for further studies to ensure the dam project is in line with international standards, citing the expert committee's report.

Egypt and Ethiopia have held talks regarding the Renaissance Dam previously. Yet, they were not able to resolve certain sticking points.

“Egypt's Water Minister to Visit Ethiopia On Saturday”, 14/09/2014, online at:

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201409152062.html>

BACK TO TOP

❖ Misplaced Opposition to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (1-2)

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, 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 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 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 for conflict in a number of regions in the world 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 - the criticisms ranging from cost and scheduling overruns (as a recent study by Ansar, Flyvbjerg, Budzier and Lunn of Oxford University shows), 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 goes 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)." 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." 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." 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 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 , 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. Nowadays, and not surprisingly, even the Egyptian Minister of Antiquities is against the GERD. 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 use of the Nile waters. For instance, Egypt objected 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.

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,” 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) 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. 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.

“Misplaced Opposition to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (1-2)”, 13/09/2014, online at:
<http://news.sudanvisiondaily.com/details.html?rsnpid=240349>

BACK TO TOP

❖ East Africa bloc appeals to Int'l community to help drought-hit Somalia

NAIROBI, Sept. 11 (Xinhua) -- East Africa's bloc on Thursday appealed to the international community to help Somalia where more than one million people face food shortages.

The regional bloc, Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), also hailed the measures the Somali government has undertaken to mitigate the devastating effects of the current drought in the country.

"IGAD hereby places an appeal to the international community to promptly assist the Somali government in its effort to overcome the challenges of drought before it becomes famine," said the statement received in Nairobi.

The appeal comes after the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has warned of worsening food security situation in Somalia in the next several months as drought looms in the Horn of Africa nation.

Latest assessment findings by the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit and the Famine Early Warning Systems Network reflect a significant decline of food providing, owing to a lethal mix of drought, surging food prices and conflict.

Over one million people in Somalia face food insecurity today, up by 20 percent from 857,000 six months ago, bringing the total number of people in need of humanitarian assistance or livelihood support to over 3 million.

According to the UN, after gradual rebuilding of livelihoods since the 2011 famine that cost over 250,000 lives in excess mortality, fragile gains are now being eroded and malnutrition rates are again on the rise.

The regional bloc said the Somali government has not only established a Special Committee to tackle the drought and its effects, but also follows and addresses the needs of those who are affected as much as its capacity allows.

The Somalia government has declared the urgency of making food, water, medication and shelter available to the victims of the current drought, which has occurred within a very short span of time since the last devastating drought of 2011.

It has also allocated 500,000 U.S. dollars to the victims to reach intended recipients as soon as possible in the form of the items mentioned above.

"IGAD would like to add its voice to that of the government of Somalia in stressing the need for international assistance in the form not only of food, water and medication, but also vehicles and other technical support that would assist in moving the supplies to where they are most needed," the statement said.

"It should be clear to all that though the Al-Shabaab is defeated, it does not mean that it cannot impede the movement of supplies in some of the drought affected areas, and that is why all those who are trying to support the government should be ready for any eventuality and be equipped to deal with it in the interest of the victims of the drought."

"East Africa bloc appeals to Int'l community to help drought-hit Somalia", 11/09/2014, online at:
http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/africa/2014-09/11/c_133636295.htm?utm_source=Circle+of+Blue+WaterNews+%26+Alerts&utm_campaign=045457d500-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c1265b6ed7-045457d500-250657169

BACK TO TOP

❖ **Mekong river could rise 3 metres**

THAILAND - Thai authorities have put people living along the Mekong River on high alert because a dam in Yunnan province in southern China needs to release a huge volume of water soon due to heavy rainfall upstream.

"If the discharge from China's Jinghong Dam reaches 8,000-9,000 cubic metres per second, the water level will increase by about three metres (within days)," Songklod Duanghaklang, director of the Chiang Rai Marine Office, said yesterday.

The office sent a letter to the Chiang Saen district chief warning that the dam would drain water from its reservoir from September 5-30.

The dam on the mainstream of the Mekong has the capacity to discharge up to 9,000 cubic metres per second. Its reservoir now contains 591-602 million cubic metres, the letter said.

When the level touches 8.5 metres, the Mekong will overflow in the Thai province of Chiang Rai.

"We are now working closely with the local weather bureau to monitor the water level and, when the need arises, issue timely alerts," he said.

The Irrigation Department, however, has reported that Jinghong dam is discharging 535 cubic meters of water per second downstream. As of Saturday, the water level at Chiang Rai's Chiang Saen district, the first Thai district where the water would reach, was seven metres below the river bank, it said.

Other locations including Nong Khai, Nakhon Phanom and Mukdahan are 2.2, 3.7 and 4 metres below the river bank, it said.

The Mekong River Commission, a regional body for Mekong utilities, has issued no flood warnings from sites it monitors for water flow. The level of the Mekong in its stretch through Thailand should be stable for this week, the MRC's website says. The forecast level at Chiang Saen district today is 4.65m, which is far below the 11.8m flood level at the site, it said.

Meanwhile, flooding in the Chao Phraya basin is now at a critical stage.

Chatchai Promlert, director-general of the Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Department, said Chiang Rai, Sukhothai, Tak, Nakhon Sawan and Phichit were now inundated.

"Flash floods have hit 25 villages of Chiang Rai," he said.

Flooding has affected more than 14,000 people in 28 provinces across the country since August 26. In less than two weeks, floods have caused 10 deaths. However, the worst is over in most provinces.

"Only five provinces are still under water," Chatchai said, referring to records in his hands.

Officials were now mobilising resources for rescue and relief operations. "Infrastructure is being restored and financial aid is being delivered to flood victims in line with the law," he said.

Victims can call 1784 round the clock for help from his department.

Locals in the Lower Chao Phraya River Basin are now bracing for possible floods, as run-off from the North will usually reach their hometowns around this time of the year.

"I've seen the water in my neighbouring canal rising up fast in recent days," said Bang-orn Kulsiri, a resident of Angthong.

This canal is a tributary of the Chao Phraya River, she said,

The National Disaster Warning Centre has also issued flash flood and landslide warnings for Prachin Buri, Chanthaburi and Trat.

"Floods and mudslides may strike on Sunday and Monday," it said.

"Mekong river could rise 3 metres", 08/09/2014, online at: <http://news.asiaone.com/news/asia/mekong-river-could-rise-3-metres>

BACK TO TOP

❖ **Amid drought, Texas is fuming because Mexico isn't sending the water it owes**

CIUDAD ACUNA, Mexico — In 1945, President Harry S. Truman signed a treaty intended to bring fair play to the fight for water in the parched deserts of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.

Nearly 70 years later, engineer Roberto Enriquez de la Garza stood on the lip of the Amistad Dam — vultures circling overhead, grassy islands poking out of the depleted reservoir below — and explained why Mexico can't hold up its side of the bargain.

“The U.S. gets angry: Why aren't you giving us water? Well, how can we when there is no water?” he asked. “I can't do anything. It's not raining.”

The historic drought across the western United States that has drained the water table in California and devastated rivers and reservoirs in Arizona has intensified a diplomatic dispute here along the Texas border. Under the terms of the treaty, the United States is obliged to give Mexico water from the Colorado River, while Mexico must transfer water from the Rio Grande and its tributaries.

But in recent years, Mexico has fallen behind on its obligation. The accounting for the water sharing is tallied in five-year cycles. And at this point, in the fourth year of the present cycle, Mexico owes the United States 380,000 acre-feet of water, more than all the water consumed in a year by the 1.5 million residents of the Lower Rio Grande Valley in Texas.

“This issue is life or death for some of our farmers, their ability to support their families and make a living,” said Texas state Rep. Eddie Lucio III (D), who has been leading the charge to make Mexico give from its rivers. “We've been good neighbors. We just want to share and share alike.”

The Amistad Dam, with its one-quarter-full, border-straddling reservoir, is ground zero in the dispute. Finished during the Nixon administration in 1969, the dam is jointly administered by the two countries: Of the 16 floodgates, eight are maintained by Mexico and eight by the United States. Each country operates a hydroelectric power plant at the dam, and water levels and releases are calculated and coordinated by engineers from both countries. In the Cold War-era control rooms, clocks show both Mexican and U.S. time zones.

Mexico doesn't dispute its water debt but says that its own shortages make it impossible, at this point, to supply the annual 350,000 acre-feet that it should be giving to the United States.

"We have had a prolonged drought since 1994 until now. It has been difficult for Mexico to give this water," said Ignacio Peña Treviño, Mexico's representative here on the International Boundary and Water Commission. "There isn't rain like there was in the past."

The treaty, which was agreed on in 1944 and ratified by the U.S. Senate the following year, stipulates that in the event of a dam failure or "extraordinary drought," either side can make up its shortage in the next five-year cycle. But water officials in Texas don't think Mexico's weather conditions meet that standard.

"They haven't been in any sort of significant drought conditions since March of 2012," said Carlos Rubinstein, chairman of the Texas Water Development Board. "That excuse, pardon the pun, doesn't hold water."

Texas's water supply has improved since its most acute drought a few years ago — in 2011, all 254 counties were suffering drought conditions. But pockets of the state are still suffering. Cities such as Raymondville and Rio Hondo have had to purchase water from other jurisdictions.

A Texas A&M University study estimated that Mexico's failure to share water was causing a loss of nearly 5,000 jobs and \$229 million in revenue from crops such as cotton, corn, sorghum and citrus fruits.

Texas officials of all ranks clamor for relief. Gov. Rick Perry (R) wrote to President Obama last year about the problem. Federal and state legislators are demanding that the State Department take further action to pressure Mexico to comply with the treaty. U.S. and Mexican technical officials regularly discuss the issue, Rubinstein said, but "without State Department support, none of it has translated into a meaningful agreement."

"In my mind," he said of the State Department's efforts, "they have failed."

The diplomats insist they are engaged. Roberta Jacobson, the State Department’s top official for Latin America, wrote in a letter last year that she and her colleagues raise the water issue “everywhere we encounter Mexican leaders.” She added that “we will persist in our advocacy until we achieve our goal of securing sufficient water deliveries from Mexico to relieve the hardship of south Texas communities.” A U.S. official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to comment publicly on the issue said U.S. officials are “continuing to stress to the government of Mexico the importance we place on reaching agreement on a durable solution quickly.”

Whether the drought on the Mexican side qualifies as “extraordinary” or not, the signs of a dwindling water supply are everywhere. Grim little tributaries seem to barely clear the rocks before they reach the Rio Grande. Even if the floodgates were opened at the Amistad Dam, the water level wouldn’t reach them.

The United States may not be getting its full legal share, but Mexican officials point out that their northern neighbor still draws far more out of the reservoir than they do. Of the 23 cubic meters per second flowing out of the reservoir on an average day, the United States is using 20 of them. Texas officials argue that if Mexico managed its tributaries better, there would be more water for both sides.

At the same time, demand for water in Mexico has also grown sharply. Many people have moved to Ciudad Acuna, the town closest to the dam, to fill factory jobs making parts for Mexico’s booming auto industry. The population in the past 20 years has nearly doubled.

“Amid drought, Texas is fuming because Mexico isn’t sending the water it owes”, 08/09/2014, online at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/texas-is-fuming-because-mexico-isnt-sending-the-water-it-owes/2014/09/07/fb82914c-463d-409e-853c-be44e386cc45_story.html?utm_source=Circle+of+Blue+WaterNews+%26+Alerts&utm_campaign=83ebf43d2c-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c1265b6ed7-83ebf43d2c-250657169

BACK TO TOP