

**ISRAEL USING
WATER AS
WEAPON OF
WAR AS GAZA
SUPPLY
PLUMMETS BY
94%, CREATING
DEADLY
HEALTH
CATASTROPHE
- OXFAM**

EMERGENCIES

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Israel has been systematically weaponizing water against Palestinians in Gaza, showing disregard for human life and international law according to a new report published today by Oxfam.

The report, [Water War Crimes](#), finds that Israel's cutting of external water supplies, systematic destruction of water facilities and deliberate obstruction of aid have reduced the amount of water available in Gaza by 94 per cent to 4.74 litres a day per person – just under a third of the recommended minimum for survival in emergencies and less than a single toilet flush.

In January, the International Court of Justice demanded that Israel immediately improve humanitarian access. Since then, Oxfam has witnessed firsthand Israel's deliberate obstruction of a meaningful humanitarian response, which is killing Palestinian civilians.

Halima Begum, Oxfam GB Chief Executive, said: "Tragically, this is yet more proof of the horrors being inflicted on the people of Gaza by the Israeli Government, which is using starvation and, as this report shows, the systematic deprivation of water as a weapon of war. To any reasonable party, there can be little doubt that this represents a clear violation of international law.

"The impact on families in Gaza is unimaginable, from people being forced to drink polluted water to facing rivers of sewage in the streets. These appalling conditions are causing significant risk of dehydration and creating a breeding ground for the spread of disease, putting many more lives at risk."

Oxfam is calling on the new Government to use all its diplomatic leverage to achieve tangible results in the cause of peace including the release of hostages. Earlier this week, the new Foreign Secretary, David Lammy, reiterated his call for an immediate ceasefire during a visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory but Oxfam said the Government must go further by suspending UK arms exports to Israel given the knowledge that they could be used in serious violations of international humanitarian law.

Begum said: “Now is the time for a reset on UK policy concerning Gaza. We implore the new UK Government to look at all the evidence and question whether it is morally or legally right to allow arms sales to Israel to continue in the face of such atrocities.

“Ending arms sales is one step towards helping secure a ceasefire, and to allow a full and unfettered humanitarian response including provision of life-saving water supplies, as well as the safe release of all hostages.”

Oxfam analysis found:

Israeli military attacks have damaged or destroyed five water and sanitation infrastructure sites every three days since the start of the war.

The destruction of water and electricity infrastructure, and restrictions on entry into Gaza of spare parts and fuel (on average a fifth of the required amount has been allowed in) saw water production drop by 84 per cent, while external supply from Israel’s national water company, Mekorot fell by 78 per cent.

Israel has destroyed 100 per cent of all wastewater treatment plants and 70 per cent of all sewage pumps, as well as the main water quality testing laboratories in Gaza, and restricted the entry of Oxfam water testing equipment.

Gaza City has lost nearly all its water production capacity, with 88 per cent of its water wells and 100 per cent of its desalination plants damaged or destroyed.

The report highlights the dire impact of this extreme lack of clean water and sanitation on Palestinians’ health, with more than a quarter (26 per cent) of Gaza’s population falling severely ill from easily preventable diseases like acute watery diarrhoea and jaundice.

Monther Shoblak, general manager of The Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU), which is responsible for water and sanitation in Gaza and with whom Oxfam works, said:

“My colleagues and I have been living through a nightmare these past nine months, but we still feel it’s our responsibility and duty to ensure everybody in Gaza is getting their minimum right of clean drinking water. It’s been very difficult, but we are determined to keep trying – even when we witness our colleagues being targeted and killed while undertaking their work.”

/ENDS

For more information, or to arrange an interview please

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

Water, fuel and supply related data was current at 26 May

Destruction figures were current at 3 June

Methodology used to calculate figures available upon request

WHO found that a lack of clean water and sanitation led to 26 per cent of Gaza’s population falling ill to easily preventable diseases

**STOP ARMING ISRAEL: SIGN OUR
PETITION**