



AL-HAQ

FACTS

ON THE GROUND

How natural resources fuel the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Ideology and politics are not the only drivers of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Economics plays an important role too. The Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) is rich in natural resources, but through its occupation, Israel illegally exploits them for its own benefit. This fuels the conflict in two important ways:

Israel's exploitation of resources sustains illegal settlements

Illegal under international law, Israeli settlements represent the primary obstacle to peace. The exploitation of Palestinian natural resources provides the means for them to exist and grow.



They are built on land seized from Palestinians and are supplied with Palestinian water. They establish farms, factories and quarries that harvest resources. In a vicious circle, the income generated from these industries allows settlements to expand further, exploiting yet more resources as they grow.

“ The key long-term constraints blocking the emergence of a strong economy are the loss of Palestinian natural resources to occupation and settlements ”

Source: UN Conference on Trade and Development

Israel's exploitation of resources holds back the Palestinian economy

By restricting Palestinians' access to their own natural resources, Israel is denying them vital economic opportunities, whilst profiting from its own illegal exploitation of them. This discriminatory policy restricts growth and exacerbates inequality. As long as Israeli companies are able to exploit Palestinian resources with impunity, Israel has a further incentive to continue the occupation.



\$3.4 billion

The estimated boost to the economy if Palestinians were able to exploit their natural resources in Area C

Source: World Bank



Most of Palestine's natural resources are located in Area C, which constitutes over 60 percent of the West Bank. According to the World Bank, the land, stone and Dead Sea mineral deposits in Area C could boost the Palestinian economy by \$1.7 billion each year, if Palestinians had access to them. An additional \$1.7 billion would follow from the subsequent construction, tourism and telecommunications booms, which would in turn reduce poverty, unemployment and dependence on foreign aid.

Time is running out



Imagine that the conflict is over a glass of water, rather than a piece of territory. As the two sides negotiate, one side is drinking from the glass, making itself stronger as its rival grows weaker. When they finally reach an agreement, the glass is empty.



Palestine's natural resources will not last forever. While the world has been seeking an end to the conflict, Israel has been accelerating its exploitation of resources. What will be left when peace is achieved?



Under Israel's occupation, the Dead Sea is dying, settlements are taking more and more land, quarries are being exhausted, and water aquifers overexploited. The UN predicts that Gaza could be completely uninhabitable by 2020.

If Palestine loses its natural resources, peace will be a hollow victory.

The Resources



Land



Water



Dead Sea



Oil & Gas



Stone

Minerals



Land

Israel has full control over the West Bank's resource-rich Area C, over 99 percent of which is either heavily restricted or completely inaccessible to Palestinians because Israel has designated its land for settlements, military zones or nature reserves.

\$2.2 billion

The annual cost of Israeli restrictions on Palestinian agriculture

Source: Visualizing Palestine



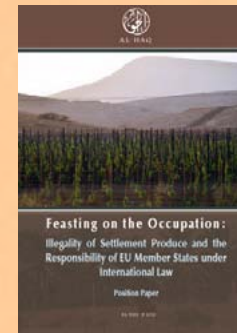
Even where Palestinian development of land is possible, Israel severely limits it, either by refusing to issue permits for construction or by denying access altogether.

Data shows that the combined Israeli restrictions on agriculture cost the Palestinian economy \$2.2 billion each year. According to the World Bank, lifting these restrictions would spark

a \$239 million construction boom, providing vital jobs and housing.



Infographic: The cost of Israeli Restrictions on Palestinian farming



Al-Haq's settlement produce report

Land is also the basis for Israeli settlement agriculture, which has flourished in the West Bank. In 2015 Human Rights Watch found that hundreds of children as young as 11 years old are employed on these farms, earning as little as \$19 per day for grueling and dangerous work. The produce from these settlements is sold around the world, generating vital income that helps sustain their illegal presence and encourage their growth. The EU alone imports \$300 million of settlement products each year.



This is one in Al-Haq's series of Virtual Field Visits on the topic of business and human rights. This video focuses on the export of fresh produce grown in illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied Jordan Valley and sold in Europe.



Water

Israel controls the Palestinian water supply, and can turn off the taps at any moment. There are 2.6 million Palestinians and 500,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank, but the settler population consumes six times as much water as the Palestinian population. To sustain this supply, Israel has consistently over-exploited shared water sources for its own benefit, whilst limiting Palestinian access. Around 200,000 Palestinians in the West Bank have no access to the water network whatsoever.

95%

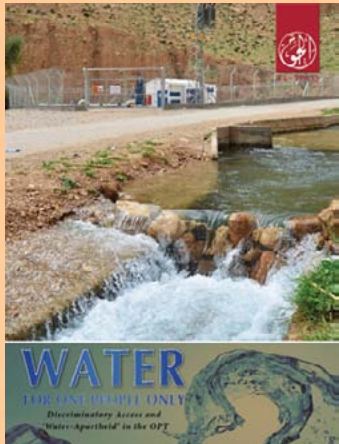
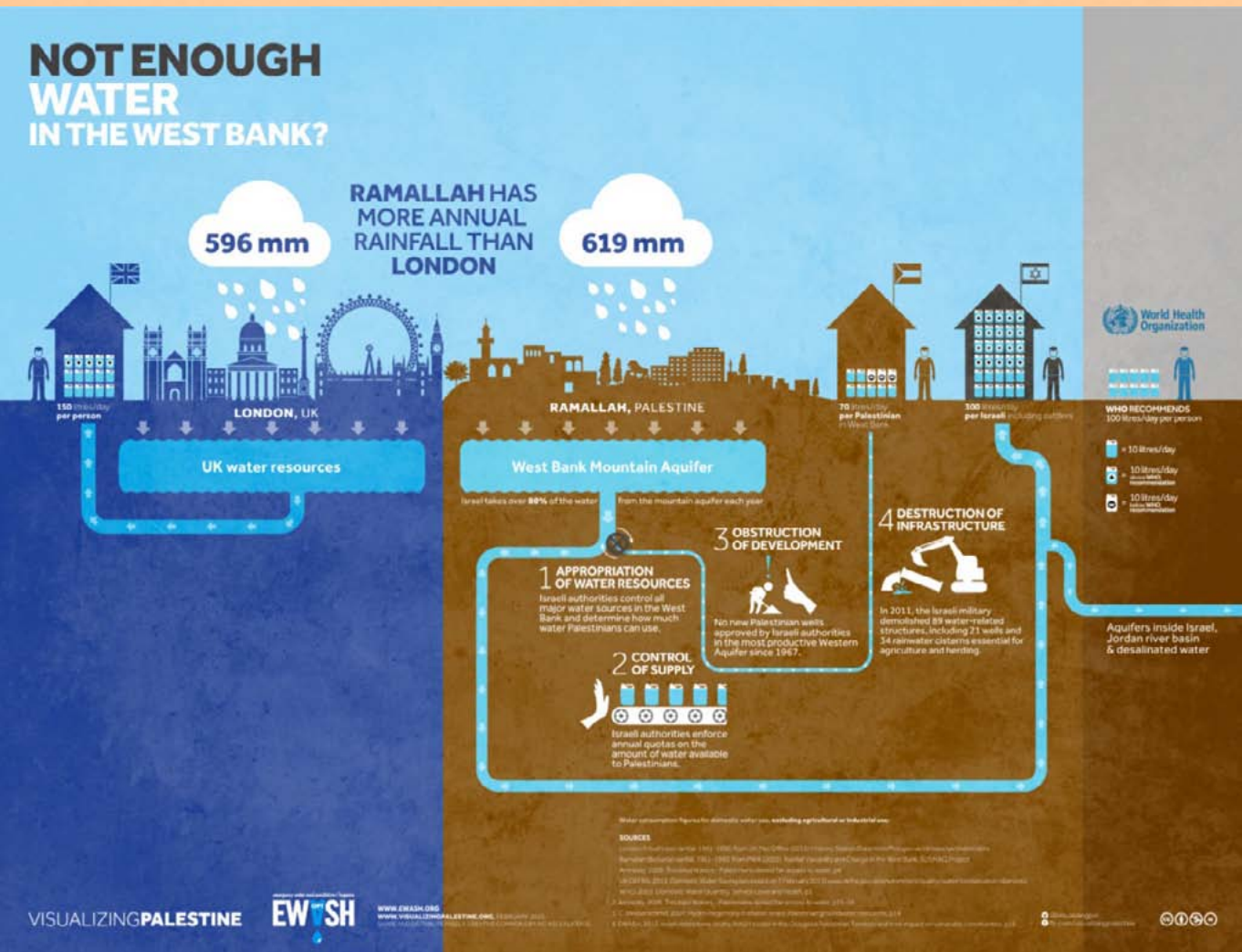
of Gaza's water is unfit for human consumption. Its 1.8 million inhabitants have no other choice.

Source: UN



Israel's national water company, Mekorot, routinely cuts the water supply to Palestinians—sometimes by as much as 50 percent—during the summer months in order to meet demand in the settlements.

In the Gaza Strip, Israeli military operations frequently target water infrastructure, but when the dust settles, Israel blocks the import of construction materials for repairing pumps or building new ones. Damage to infrastructure in the 2014 war left 450,000 Gazans without access to the water network.



Al-Haq's water report

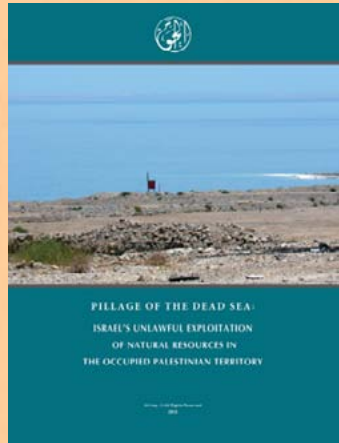
To get the water they need, Palestinians are forced buy from private companies at extortionate rates, and to dig 'illegal' pumps without permits. These are routinely destroyed by Israeli soldiers. Settlers pay a minimal rate, and do not require permits.

In Gaza, there is only one source of freshwater, and residents have over-pumped it in order to cope with the inadequate main supply. As a result, 95 percent of water there is now unfit for human consumption due to pollution.



Dead Sea Minerals

The Dead Sea's unique geographical, mineral and climatic features make it rich in natural resources, including potash and bromine, as well as mineral-rich mud that is harvested for lucrative cosmetics industries. Thirty percent (40km) of its shore lies in Palestinian territory, but Israeli restrictions prevent the Palestinian economy from exploiting it. Israel meanwhile earns \$3 billion each year from Dead sea products, and its 15 hotels on the shore generate around \$291 million. Most of these are on a single 6km stretch on the southern coast.



Al-Haq's Dead Sea report

The only company licensed by Israel to extract Dead Sea mud is Ahava, which operates out of the settlements Mitzpe Shalem, which receives significant financial subsidies from the Israeli government.

Today, the Dead Sea is in fact two lakes. Israel's diversion of the water flow to supply its settlements, in combination with the over-use of water for extracting minerals, has caused a dramatic decline in the sea level by an average of 3 feet per year. It was 50 miles long in 1950, but is less than 30 miles long today.

\$918 million

The estimated value of a future Palestinian Dead Sea mineral extraction industry

Source: World Bank



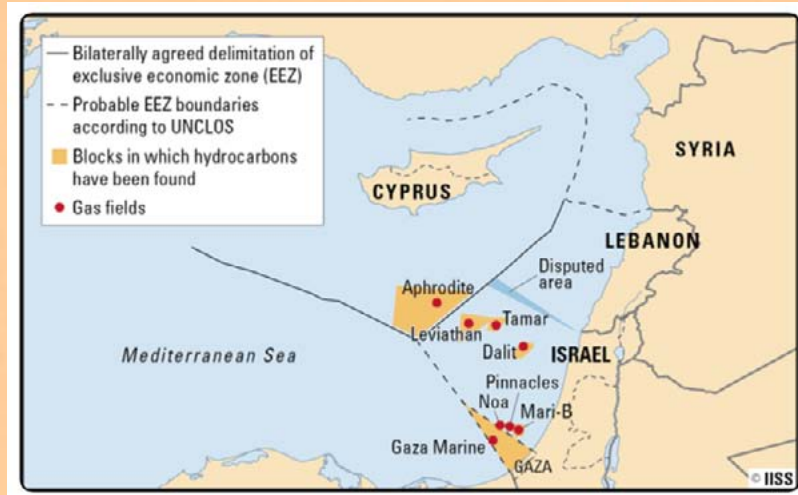
Wastewater, meanwhile, is allowed to flow back into the sea, and thousands of sinkholes have appeared on its western shores, all threatening its future as an industrial resource, a tourist attraction, and a natural wonder.





Oil and Gas

The US Geological Survey estimates that there are 1.7 billion barrels of recoverable oil and 122 trillion cubic feet of recoverable gas off the Mediterranean coast of Gaza, Israel and Lebanon. If Palestine were allowed to develop its share, it could transform from one of the world's highest aid recipients to being economically self-sufficient.



Source: Oil and Gas Mediterranean

But Israel has closed off access to Palestine's territorial waters in order to protect its own gas platforms and pipelines, and routinely attacks, injures and kills Palestinian fishermen in Israel's unilaterally imposed 6-nautical-

122 trillion

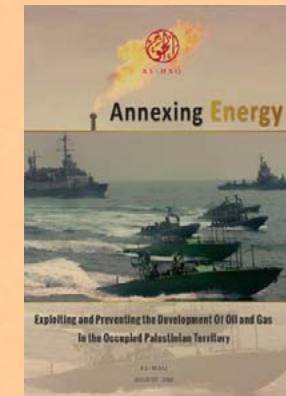
cubic feet of gas lies off the coast off Gaza, Israel, and Lebanon, but Palestinians cannot access their share

Source: US Geological Survey

mile coastal limit. The Israeli military has also destroyed energy infrastructure across Gaza, including the strip's lone power station.

As a result, the OPT is almost completely dependent on Israel for its energy. In 2007 alone, Palestine imported 100 percent of its petroleum and 92 percent of its electrical energy from the Israel Electric Corporation.

Israel has meanwhile fast-tracked the development of its own offshore gas reserves in the Tamar and Leviathan gas fields off the Mediterranean, and has unilaterally developed gas fields that span both Israeli and Palestinian waters.



Al-Haq's oil and gas report

The land around the West Bank village of Rantis contains vast oil deposits that could also help Palestinians become more self-sufficient, but in 2003 Israel illegally appropriated the land and extended the annexation wall to prevent Palestinians from entering. Meanwhile, Israel has leased the rights to exploit the oil fields that span both Israeli and Palestinian territory without the necessary cooperation from the Palestinian Authority.



Al-Haq Virtual Field Visits: Business And Human Rights

This video continues Al-Haq's series of Virtual Field Visits on the topic of business and human rights. The video shows how corporations and other international actors are complicit in Israel's exploitation of Palestinian gas resources.



Stone

Stone is currently Palestine's largest export industry, earning it the nickname 'white oil'. But businesses are held back by Israel's systematic refusal to grant permits for them to open new quarries or renew existing licenses.

75%
of stone quarried by Israeli firms in the West Bank is illegally exported to Israel

Source: Yesh Din



The majority of the West Bank's stone deposits are in Area C. Israeli mining companies operate quarries there, condoned by Israel in contravention of international law. Palestinian businesses, meanwhile, are systematically denied the opportunity to compete.

Yesh Din, an Israeli human rights organisation, has found that 75 percent of the total output from Israeli quarries in the West Bank is used in the Israeli construction industry, despite Israel's obligation as an occupying power not to use the natural resources of the territory it administers for its own economic benefit.



Virtual Field Visit: Illegal quarrying in the West Bank - The case of Hanson

This is the next in Al-Haq's series of Virtual Field Visits on the topic of business and human rights. The video shines a light on corporate complicity in the illegal quarrying of construction materials in the occupied West Bank.

Time for **SANCTIONS**

The world has repeatedly condemned Israel's actions, and its flaunting of international obligations. But it must turn those words into action. In order to bring Israel into line, Al-Haq calls for international, national and local sanctions that pressure Israel to stop its exploitation of Palestinian natural resources.

Sanctions could target individuals and companies involved in illegal activity, or forms of trade that support illegal activity.

By severing these links, the international community can protect individuals, businesses and states from collusion with Israel's illegal activity, and induce Israel to stop, bringing us one step closer to a just end to the conflict.

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AL - HAQ

About AL-HAQ

Al-Haq is an independent Palestinian non-governmental human rights organisation based in Ramallah, West Bank. Established in 1979 to protect and promote human rights and the rule of law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), the organisation has special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council.

Al-Haq documents violations of the individual and collective rights of Palestinians in the OPT, regardless of the identity of the perpetrator, and seeks to end such breaches by way of advocacy before national and international mechanisms and by holding the violators accountable. The organisation conducts research; prepares reports, studies and interventions on the breaches of international human rights and humanitarian law in the OPT; and undertakes advocacy before local, regional and international bodies. Al-Haq also cooperates with Palestinian civil society organisations and governmental institutions in order to ensure that international human rights standards are reflected in Palestinian law and policies. The organisation has a specialised international law library for the use of its staff and the local community.

Al-Haq is also committed to facilitating the transfer and exchange of knowledge and experience in IHL and human rights on the local, regional and international levels through its Al-Haq Center for Applied International Law. The Center conducts training courses, workshops, seminars and conferences on international humanitarian law and human rights for students, lawyers, journalists and NGO staff. The Center also hosts regional and international researchers to conduct field research and analysis of aspects of human rights and IHL as they apply in the OPT. The Center focuses on building sustainable, professional relationships with local, regional and international institutions associated with international humanitarian law and human rights law in order to exchange experiences and develop mutual capacity.

Al-Haq is the West Bank affiliate of the International Commission of Jurists - Geneva, and is a member of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN), the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Habitat International Coalition (HIC), and the Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO).