



Fact Sheet: Gaza's Deepening Water Crisis Amid the Ongoing Genocide

Introduction

Gaza is currently facing a deliberately manufactured humanitarian catastrophe, driven by Israel's ongoing blockade and closure, systematic denial of life-sustaining humanitarian aid, and targeted attacks on civilians and vital civilian infrastructure. Since 2 March 2025, the Israeli government has reinstated a total blockade and closure on Gaza, halting the entry of humanitarian aid—including food, fuel, medical supplies, and other supplies necessary for the physical survival of two million Palestinians, half of whom are children.

At the heart of Gaza's unfolding man-made humanitarian catastrophe is an accelerating water crisis—one of the most urgent and life-threatening consequences of Israel's ongoing genocide against the Palestinian people. Access to sufficient potable and household water has become increasingly difficult due to the systematic destruction of the water sector.¹ The crisis has worsened following Israel's decision to cut electricity supplies to the largest desalination plant in Gaza, alongside the severing of key water pipelines from the Israeli national water company Mekorot and the ongoing ban on fuel needed to operate water wells and generators.

This fact sheet sheds light on the escalating water crisis in Gaza and the daily suffering of Palestinian civilians as they struggle to obtain adequate, safe drinking water during the ongoing genocide. It outlines key developments, presents testimonies from affected individuals, and concludes with urgent recommendations.

Gaza's Deepening Water Crisis

The water shortage crisis in Gaza has dangerously escalated since 2 March 2025, following the complete closure of all entry points into Gaza by Israeli authorities. This closure has cut off essential supplies of water, fuel, and electricity. Now in its second month, the closure has left service providers with no viable solutions to alleviate the population's suffering. Al Mezan warns that Gaza's water sector is on the brink of total collapse.

The per capita household water use has dropped to less than 10 liters per day.² Access to safe drinking water has been reduced to only 2–3 liters per day—barely sufficient for basic survival and far below the minimum threshold established by the World Health Organization to meet essential health and hygiene needs. These conditions are unsustainable. Without urgent intervention, including an immediate ceasefire and the full reopening of all crossings, widespread death from dehydration and starvation is imminent.

¹ The water sector consists of municipal water supplied to homes and networks for general use, desalinated water for drinking and cooking, with groundwater serving as the main source of water in the region.

² Information obtained by Al Mezan from the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, 13 April 2025.



Below is a summary of deliberate Israeli actions that have deepened Gaza's water crisis, driven by a broader genocidal intent toward the Palestinian population in Gaza:

- Before the ongoing genocide started in October 2023, the average daily water consumption per capita in Gaza was around 84.6 liters, of which only 20.5 liters was fresh water. Even before the genocide, around 97% of the water available to the local population from the coastal aquifer failed to meet World Health Organization (WHO) standards. Most of Gaza's wells show a continuous increase in salinity, reaching over 1,500 mg/L, and high nitrate concentrations ranging from 50 to 100 mg/L, exceeding the WHO's permissible limits.³
- Water provision to the population has drastically declined during the genocide. Service providers are currently able to supply only about 92,000 cubic meters of water per day, compared to 240,000 cubic meters before the war. This water is sourced from underground wells, the Israeli company Mekorot, and Al-Bassa and the southern desalination plants in Deir al-Balah. As much as 70% of the water pumped through the networks is lost due to the destruction of pipelines and water tanks, resulting in a significant decrease in per capita water availability.⁴
- Since October 2023, Israeli forces have destroyed approximately 70% of Gaza's water infrastructure. Approximately 180 kilometers (km) of water networks have already been either fully or partially destroyed.⁵ During Israel's ongoing military operation in the Rafah Governorate, 55 water and sanitation facilities went out of service in March 2025 alone.⁶
- Since 2 March 2025, Israeli authorities have banned the entry of fuel necessary to operate water wells and generators, while continuing to deliberately target water infrastructure, transportation means, and water sector workers in military attacks. These attacks have severely restricted the mobility and operational capacity of technical teams, even though their vehicles and tankers are clearly marked with water service insignia.⁷
- Israeli authorities have also prohibited the entry of equipment and spare parts since October 2023, jeopardizing the operation of generators and repairing systems, devices,

³ See Al Mezan Center for Human Rights (Al Mezan), Ecocide: Israel's Deliberate and Systematic Destruction of Gaza's Environment, published on 16 October 2024, available at:

<https://mezan.org/en/post/46554>

⁴ See Al Mezan Center for Human Rights (Al Mezan), Ecocide: Israel's Deliberate and Systematic Destruction of Gaza's Environment, published on 16 October 2024, available at:

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⁵ See Al Mezan Center for Human Rights (Al Mezan), Ecocide: Israel's Deliberate and Systematic Destruction of Gaza's Environment, published on 16 October 2024, available at:

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⁶ Information obtained by Al Mezan from the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, 13 April 2025.

⁷ Information obtained by Al Mezan from the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, 13 April 2025.



pipelines, networks, and tankers, and significantly compromising the provision of water services to the population.⁸

- Electricity outages, coupled with severe fuel shortages and repeated Israeli targeting of water facilities, have reduced Gaza's water supply to just 20% of pre-war levels. Of the 340 water wells across Gaza, only 120 remain operational—and even those are able to function for just eight hours a day.⁹
- Since 7 October 2023, water supplied by the Israeli company Mekorot has been intermittently suspended. Prior to that date, Mekorot provided approximately 52,000 cubic meters of water per day, distributed across Gaza through three main pipelines: 22,000 cubic meters/day to Gaza City and the North Gaza Governorate, and 15,000 cubic meters/day each to the Middle Area and Khan Younis Governorates. Water flow to the Middle Area Governorate resumed in January 2024, to Khan Younis in March 2024, and to Gaza Governorate in May 2024.¹⁰
- On 25 January 2025, the pipeline supplying the Middle Area Governorate was damaged. Although the competent authorities sought to coordinate with Israel to allow technical teams to carry out repairs, the Israeli authorities denied access until the time of reporting. The Mekorot pipeline serving Khan Younis remains operational.¹¹
- On 3 April 2025, the Mekorot pipeline supplying Gaza City was shut down. The Gaza Municipality [reported](#) a severe water crisis resulting from Israeli military operations in the eastern parts of the city. This pipeline, which passes through the Al-Shuja'iya neighborhood, had supplied about 20% of the city's daily water needs before the genocide. However, after the genocide caused the destruction of most local wells and the central desalination plant, and a drastic reduction in electricity supply, reliance on the Mekorot line surged to 70%. A portion of this water was distributed via mobile tanks to neighborhoods lacking access to the municipal network. Despite efforts to coordinate repair work, Israeli forces permitted access for only one day before halting further operations. The following day, they denied permission to resume the work. Ultimately, the line was repaired and water pumping resumed on 16 April 2025.
- In response, municipalities in Gaza have been forced to shift from emergency water distribution plans to stricter rationing programs, supplying water to residents once a week for only a few hours during the crisis.
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⁸ Information obtained by Al Mezan from the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, 13 April 2025.

⁹ Information obtained by Al Mezan from the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, 13 April 2025.

¹⁰ Information obtained by Al Mezan from the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, 13 April 2025.

¹¹ Information obtained by Al Mezan from the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, 13 April 2025.



- Additionally, on 9 March 2025, Israeli authorities cut off electricity to the southern desalination plant located in southwest Deir al-Balah. This came after a prior approval granted on 14 November 2024 to operate a 4-megawatt power line 24/7. Following the power cut, the plant was forced to rely on small, fuel-powered generators, reducing production from 18,000 to just 3,000 cubic meters per day. This sharp decline has significantly impacted the availability of potable water for residents in the Middle Area and Khan Younis Governorates.¹²
- Residents of Gaza City and the North Gaza Governorate currently rely on private desalination facilities for drinking and cooking water, which is distributed via water tankers. However, production at these facilities has sharply declined due to severe fuel shortages.¹³

The Struggle for Water Access in Gaza

The above list constitutes a stark reminder of the severe and continuing challenges residents of Gaza are facing to access drinking water and water for household use amid the ongoing genocide. The limited water available falls far short of meeting their basic daily needs for drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene. The testimonies below, provided by Palestinians in Gaza, reflect the immense hardship and suffering they endure in securing even minimal amounts of water.

Ahmad Mohammad Salha, 48, gave the following testimony to Al Mezan:

“I live with my family of ten in a tent I set up on the rubble of my destroyed home in the Tal al-Zaatar neighborhood, in Jabaliya, North Gaza. Since returning in February 2025, after multiple waves of displacement, I’ve faced extreme difficulty accessing water due to the destruction of municipal wells and water networks by Israeli forces.

[Local] authorities have managed to operate a limited-capacity submersible well to serve this densely populated area of around 30,000 people. Water is supplied for only one hour every three days through a single pipe reaching my tent and those of nearby families. This short window is not enough to fill our containers. Even when we do manage to fill them, the amount barely lasts for two days.

The water shortage severely affects our personal hygiene—especially for my children and grandchildren—and hampers daily tasks like washing clothes and dishes. The situation becomes even harder when we try to get clean drinking water, which only reaches us through water trucks run by charities that rarely come daily. The crowding around the trucks is intense, and I can barely fill one or two containers—roughly 20 liters. These trucks are often the only source of drinking water, and when they don’t

¹² Information obtained by Al Mezan from the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, 13 April 2025.

¹³ Information obtained by Al Mezan from the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, 13 April 2025.



arrive, we're left with no options. My neighbors and I all suffer from an extreme shortage of water, which often leads to disputes over the few available sources.”

Testimony of the displaced Mohammad Hassan Al-Zaanin, 46:

“I was displaced from Beit Hanoun after briefly returning during the February 2025 ceasefire. I now live with my family of seven in a tent near the Legislative Council in Gaza City. One of our biggest struggles is securing safe and sufficient water.

Municipal water from Gaza City’s network reaches us for only about one hour every few days. I fill a small 200-liter tank and every available container, but the water never meets our needs. This shortage forces us to prioritize essential use at the expense of hygiene and household chores.

For drinking water, we rely on water trucks run by charities that deliver daily. However, the heavy concentration of displaced families—around 1,500 people from Beit Hanoun, Beit Lahiya, Jabaliya Camp, Shuja'iyya, and Tuffah sheltering in the area between al-Jundi al-Majhool square on Omar Al-Mokhtar Street and Rashad Al-Shawa Cultural Center—makes it very difficult to collect enough water for drinking and cooking.”

Testimony of Yahya Ismail Bahr, 40, to Al Mezan:

“I live in Al-Sheikh Radwan neighborhood, Gaza City, with my 16-member family in a two-story home, along with ten displaced relatives. We struggle immensely to access water.

Due to the war, the water we receive from the Gaza Municipality is extremely salty and unfit for human consumption. I’ve learned that the municipal wells in North Gaza, which used to provide lower-salinity water, were destroyed. The current water supply reaches us with such low pressure that it can’t fill our rooftop tanks, so we have to manually collect and transfer it into a ground-level tank.

Water trucks run by charities bring drinking water daily, but the severe overcrowding often prevents us from collecting enough. At times, we are forced to purchase water at high prices that exceed our financial capacity—especially when we need larger quantities. The water crisis in Gaza has become as dire as every other aspect of life under this war.”

Testimony of Ibrahim Saleh Al-Ifranji, 50:

“I live with my family of eight in an apartment inside a building shared by four families, totaling 25 people, near Ain Jalout towers in Al-Nuseirat Camp. Access to water has worsened recently. The municipality used to supply water twice a week—on Saturdays and Tuesdays—but now it's reduced to just Tuesdays, reportedly due to fuel shortages. My home is located at the end of the street, and the water reaches us with very low pressure. I have a 500-liter tank, which I can fill only once a week, but it’s not enough. We ration the water carefully to make it last about three days.



I often walk 500 meters to find alternative water sources. For drinking water, we depend on charitable distributions from mobile trucks, but we usually manage to collect only about 40 liters for drinking and cooking. Sometimes we queue for water, but the supply runs out before our turn. The number of water vendors has decreased, and prices have surged—to around \$1 per container—which many families, including mine, simply can't afford due to the ongoing cash crisis. Even though there are two municipal wells nearby, the supply remains unstable and insufficient.”

Conclusion and Recommendations

Access to sufficient and safe water for Gaza's residents has deteriorated drastically amid Israel's ongoing genocide. In many areas, water that was previously available daily is now supplied only once a week—or even less frequently—and only for short intervals that fail to meet the basic needs of families. The complete absence of electricity has further hampered the ability to pump water to rooftop tanks, especially in multi-story buildings, worsening the crisis.

Access to drinking water is particularly dire. The production capacity of the desalination plant in southern Gaza has significantly dropped, rendering it unable to meet the needs of both local residents and displaced persons in the Middle Area and Khan Younis Governorates. Meanwhile, private desalination plants in Gaza City and the northern areas are unable to meet growing demand, and the cost of purchasing water far exceeds the financial capacity of most households.

Accordingly, Al Mezan calls for:

1. Immediate and unconditional opening of all crossings into Gaza to allow the entry of essential items including food, fuel, and the equipment required to operate and maintain water and sanitation infrastructure.
2. International pressure on Israel to cease its attacks on water infrastructure, including wells, desalination plants, water networks, and power generators necessary for their operation.
3. Pressure on Israel to ensure the supply of safe and sufficient water to Gaza, including restoring the flow from the Israeli company Mekorot, and reinstating electricity to key desalination plants and water wells.
4. Urgent international action to end the genocide in Gaza, enforce an immediate and permanent ceasefire, and ensure the protection of Palestinian civilians and civilian infrastructure.
5. Concrete steps to end the longstanding impunity enjoyed by Israeli perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, including the execution of the arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court and compliance with the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, which affirms the illegality of the occupation and the global responsibility to bring it to an end.