



Jerusalem, October 27, 2009

Response to Amnesty International's report on Israeli- Palestinian water issues

The Israel-Palestinian water policy is based on an interim agreement between the two parties, particularly on Article 40 of Annex III to the agreement, which relates to the question of water and sewage. According to the agreement, 23.6 million cubic meters of water will be allocated to the Palestinians annually. In actual effect, they have access to twice as much water.

Israel has fulfilled all its obligations under the water agreement regarding the supply of additional quantities of water to the Palestinians, and has even extensively surpassed the obligatory quantity. The Palestinians, on the other hand, have significantly violated their commitments under the water agreement, specifically regarding important issues such as illegal drilling (they have drilled over 250 wells without the authorization of the Joint Water Commission) and handling of sewage (The Palestinians are not constructing sewage treatment plants, despite their obligation to do so and the important foreign funding earmarked for this purpose).

Data regarding consumption of fresh natural water clearly shows Israel's fair treatment of Palestinian requirements:

In 1967, Israel's per capita consumption of fresh natural water was 508 (m³/person/year). In 2008, it dramatically dropped to 149. The Palestinian figures for the same consumption went from 86 (in 1967) to 105 (in 2008).

Israel has offered to supply Palestinians with desalinated water, but this possibility is systematically rejected due to political motivations.

While Israel has significantly reduced its use of fresh natural water since 1967, consistently closing the gap between Israeli and Palestinian consumption, it remains unclear how Amnesty's claims of "discriminatory policies" towards Palestinians can sustain the trial of reality. The authors of the report chose to ignore Israeli data, papers and reports, although they contain verifiable facts presented with total transparency. This questionable approach, which consists in systematically disregarding Israeli material while relying exclusively on Palestinian allegations, raises doubts as to the real intentions of the report's authors and of the organization itself.

A thorough report on the issue of water between Israel and the Palestinians can be consulted on the website of the Israel Water Authority:

<http://www.water.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/A111EFEF-3857-41F0-B598-F48119AE9170/0/WaterIssuesBetweenIsraelandthePalestinians.pdf>