



# 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**

*18 April 2017 – 1 May 2017*

### **Iraqi Government Has US\$13 Billion to Fund Water Desalination Projects**

Iraqi Housing and Reconstruction Ministry disclosed that a number of reputable foreign and European companies submitted offers to build a water desalination projects.

The ministry pointed that this project shall be financed by the 13 billion-dollar British loan.

The British loan is expected to solve part of the infrastructure problems in the country, particularly those connected with water and sewerage systems.

24/04/2017 online at: [https://www.rebuildingiraq.net/news/view/39599-Iraqi-Government-Has-US\\$13-Billion-to-Fund-Water-Desalination-Projects](https://www.rebuildingiraq.net/news/view/39599-Iraqi-Government-Has-US$13-Billion-to-Fund-Water-Desalination-Projects)

### **At Mosul waterfalls, Iraqis determined to enjoy post-ISIS life**

Crowds of Iraqis gathered by Mosul's waterfalls on Friday (April 21) to savor simple freedoms like dancing or wearing colorful clothes that were strictly banned during almost three years of Islamic State (ISIS) rule.

Music blasted from tall speakers mounted on pickup trucks and mini-vans. Children splashed in the water in the city's Shallalat (Waterfalls) district or rode bikes, horses and donkeys in the surrounding park.

It was like a mass picnic, with about 2,000 people out enjoying the sunshine, while fighting between U.S.-backed forces and Islamist militants raged only 20 kilometers (12.4 miles) away in the part of Mosul west of the Tigris River.

The Sunni Muslim militants enforced a strict interpretation of Islam on residents during their reign which included forcing men to grow long beards and women to cover their faces. Anyone breaking those rules would be severely punished.

Umm Qassem, said "they were harassing us; about men's pants length, beards, and face veils," referring to ISIS, which took over Mosul in 2014 and was driven out of eastern Mosul in January 2017.

That atmosphere was gone on Friday as women wore bright colours rather than the black dress enforced by ISIS fighters. Beer and whiskey bottles lay on the ground.

"We are very happy we got rid of Islamic State. For three years, we were destroyed, we could not wear stylish clothes," said Muthana Irshad, who had grown his hair long and donned a gold chain dangling a dollar sign.

"They destroyed youths and families. They killed two of my brothers," he said, before going back to dance with his friends.

The battle to free Mosul - between ISIS militants and Iraqi forces - is now in its seventh month and has taken a heavy toll on several hundred thousand civilians trapped in neighborhoods inside the city, still under control of the militants.

Iraqi forces are making progress in their offensive to expel ISIS from Mosul but face a complicated urban battle as the militants hide in mosques, homes and hospitals, sheltering among civilians in the city in order to evade airstrikes.

The war between ISIS and Iraqi forces is taking a heavy toll on several hundred thousand civilians trapped inside the city, with severely malnourished babies reaching hospitals in government-held areas.

The operation to regain full control of Mosul from ISIS militants began on October 17 last year.

Iraqi forces liberated the eastern side of Mosul in February and are currently involved in an operation to regain the western side.

22/04/2017 online at: <http://www.nrttv.com/en/Details.aspx?Jimare=14023>

### **Six months into battle for Mosul, water, trauma care are key UN and partner priorities**

Safe drinking water is a major concern in Mosul, where a battle has been underway for the past six months to retake the city from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the United Nations humanitarian arm has said.

Some 450,000 people are currently displaced and the number continues “to increase rapidly,” the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Iraq said.

Humanitarian partners are trucking water to eastern Mosul at a rate of 2.3 million liters every day. Nearly 28 neighborhoods now have access to clean drinking water in the east.

However, “in newly retaken areas of western Mosul city, water trucking has already begun on a small scale, but significant increase in scale is required,” OCHA said.

The UN is also working with partners to re-establish a functioning city-wide water network.

In addition to water, emergency food and hygiene supplies are being distributed to families close to the front lines. More than 2.1 million people received urgent aid since October.

As the fighting rages, ensuring that trauma casualties receive the specialized treatment they need in a timely manner remains a high priority, UN and humanitarian partners have said.

Since mid-October, more than 8,100 people have been referred to hospitals in Mosul and surrounding areas. New field hospitals have also been created, one for emergency reproductive and obstetric healthcare.

In addition, the UN and its partners are working to house families and provide protection, particularly to women and children.

More funding is needed. The 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan for Iraq requesting \$985 million is currently 17 per cent funded, according to OCHA. About \$331 million of that is sought for the Mosul operation.

26/04/2017 online at:

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=56631#.WQg2vhPyjct>

### **New treatment plant to provide clean drinking water to conflict-affected Iraqis south of Mosul**

A new water treatment plant on the banks of the Tigris River will provide clean drinking water for more than 50,000 Iraqis at the Qayyarah Airstrip Emergency Site, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) said on Thursday.

The plant, currently under construction, is supported by UNICEF and EU humanitarian aid and will provide both emergency and long-term solutions for the current water crisis stemming from military operations in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, which has so far resulted in the displacement of more than a half million people.

‘The majority of water treatment plants along the Tigris have been destroyed in fighting over the last several years, leaving vulnerable populations with only access to raw, untreated river water,’ said Thomas Wilson, Coordinator for DRC’s Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) programme.

‘We decided to build a new treatment plant to provide clean drinking water to the camp and host community as a way of providing an immediate and longer-term solution.’

Located some three kilometers east of the Airstrip, the treatment facility – a compact design of traditional plants – can provide up to 200 cubic metres of water (200,000 litres) per hour for camp residents, greatly increasing both the quantity and quality of drinking water.

DRC has worked with authorities and engineers from the local water directorate to design and build the treatment plant as both a response to the current humanitarian emergency and a longer-term, durable solution for water provision in the area.

After the construction of a connecting pipeline to the Airstrip, the treatment plant will more than triple the current provision of clean drinking water to residents.

‘With the arrival of summer, water consumption across Iraq will spike and we are now in a better position to provide enough water per person in the Airstrip,’ Wilson added. ‘This will help mitigate the outbreak of diseases like cholera, which is endemic across the country.’

27/04/2017 online at: <http://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/new-treatment-plant-provide-clean-drinking-water-conflict-affected-iraqis-south-mosul>

### **Iran Water, Power Engineering Exports Noteworthy**

The water and power sectors have made a significant contribution to exports of technical and engineering services in the past few years, a top energy official says.

“Water and electricity services made up almost 98% of Iran's total exports of technical and engineering services in fiscal 2015-16,” Alireza Daemi, deputy energy minister for international affairs, was quoted as saying by IRNA on Sunday.

He made the statement on the sidelines of an energy conference in Tehran.

In fiscal 2013-14, water and power services made up 47.4% of engineering exports. But the volume increased to 62.1% and 98.7% in the next two fiscals.

Daemi reiterated that the Energy Ministry is keen on supporting domestic companies to increase the exports of technical and engineering services and expand collaboration with international majors.

“Raising funds from domestic investors and attracting foreign direct investment to fund water and power projects as well as forge joint ventures between domestic and international companies are on the agenda of the ministry.”

Daemi said earlier that by taking into account direct electricity exports, the total value of exports in water and power industries exceeded \$8 billion in almost four years.

--- Overseas Projects

Energy Minister Hamid Chitchian told the conference on Sunday that Iranian contractors had undertaken \$4.6 billion worth of energy projects overseas in four years.

Since President Hassan Rouhani took office in mid-2013, "Iranian companies have completed 94 projects in different energy sectors," Chitchian said, referring to data published by the Ministry of Industry.

"The value of Iranian power projects overseas pales in comparison with that of other countries...However, the water and electricity sectors have performed far better than other industries," the minister told the conferees.

Alireza Kolahi, the head of Iran Electricity Industry Syndicate, said at the weekend that Iran has the potential to emerge as “one of the largest exporters of technical and engineering services in the world” thanks to its rich mineral deposits and massive hydrocarbon reserves.

To manufacture power cables, copper and petrochemicals are required. Iran is rich in raw materials. It sits on approximately 5% of the global copper deposits and can become a major petrochemical producer with its large oil and gas reserves, he said.

"The country should move toward making better use of its natural resources to produce products with higher value-added."

24/04/2017 online at: <https://financialtribune.com/articles/energy/63004/iran-water-power-engineering-exports-noteworthy>

## **Water availability in NENA region to face 50% decline by 2050**

FAO with collaboration of the Iran Chamber of Commerce held a two-day (29-30 April) international conference in Tehran to highlight the value of Virtual Water to address impacts of climate change, population growth and food security at national, regional and global levels.

According to a press release published by the Representation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Iran, Serge Nakouzi, the FAO Representative to Iran warned that water availability in the Middle East and North Africa region decreased by about 65 percent during the last 40 years and it has been expected to fall by another 50 percent by 2050.

“The threat of climate change has been compounding the situation, increasing the recurrence and severity of drought conditions in many of the countries in the Middle East region including Islamic Republic of Iran in recent years” he added in his last public speech in Tehran before departure of the country and joining the FAO Regional Office for Africa as the Deputy Regional Representative.

“I trust that with the good level of support that FAO is receiving from its national and international partners and in close collaboration with the sister agencies in the UN system, FAO will effectively contribute to the sustainable development of this great country” he underscored in concluding his remarks.

Mr. Abbas Araqchi, Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs and Mr. Mahmoud Hojjati Ministr of Jihad-e-Agriculture were also as the key speakers of the Conference.

The FAO’s Regional Initiative on Water Scarcity for the Near East and North Africa (NENA) has formulated in 2013 to support the countries of the NENA Region to cope with their most striking challenges including the pursuit of food and water securities, for a sustainable social and economic development, under an unprecedented severe escalation of water scarcity.

The objectives of the initiative are: enhancing policies, investments, governance and best practices to sustainably increase water and land productivity; providing tools for strategic planning of optimal and sustainable allocation of scarce water resources; implementing a regional collaborative strategy for a water-reform agenda.

30/04/2017 online at: <http://en.mehrnews.com/news/125111/Water-availability-in-NENA-region-to-face-50-decline-by-2050>

## **U.S.-Israeli Team Finds Better Way to Keep Drinking Water Virus-Free**

Israeli and American scientists have jointly developed a way to dramatically improve the removal of viruses from treated wastewater used for drinking.

Currently, the membrane used to remove viruses in non-chemical water filtration systems requires large amounts of energy. To solve this inefficiency, the researchers developed a special hydrogel coating that can be applied to the filtering membrane. This gel repels viruses in the water and prevents them from either approaching or passing through the filtration system.

“This is an urgent matter of public safety,” Prof. Moshe Herzberg of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and Prof. Nguyen Thanh H. Nguyen of University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, who led the research team, said in a statement on Wednesday. “Insufficient removal of human Adenovirus in municipal wastewater, for example, has been detected as a contaminant in U.S. drinking water sources, including the Great Lakes and worldwide.”

The project, which is especially important for cities with limited water supplies, was funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the German-Israeli Water Technology Cooperation Program. The latter program is funded by Israel’s Ministry of Science and Technology and Germany’s Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

21/04/2017 online at: <http://www.thetower.org/4888-u-s-israeli-team-finds-better-way-to-keep-drinking-water-virus-free/>

### **Blowing Israel’s aqua-shenanigans out of the water**

High up on Israel’s list of fabricated and otherwise shamelessly embellished achievements is that of having allegedly “made the desert bloom” promptly after setting up shop on usurped Palestinian land in 1948.

Never mind that Palestine wasn’t exactly a desert - or that “blooming” techniques involved mass slaughter as well as plenty of ecological devastation. We mustn’t let facts get in the way of creation myths.

In contemporary times, Israel has continued to market itself as a global pioneer in water technology and conservation, from drip irrigation systems to desalination.

Of course, some might argue that Israel has enjoyed an unfair competitive advantage in the water realm given that it has been able to dominate access to the valuable resource by diverting regional waterways in its favour and literally hijacking Palestinian aquifers.

Now, Israel is once again making disingenuous waves through the Israeli firm Water-Gen - which, a recent obsequious dispatch in the Times of Israel informs us, is “look[ing] to quench global thirst” by extracting water from air.

Scarce water - or stolen?

The Times explains that Water-Gen was founded by an ex-combat reconnaissance company commander in the Israeli military and is currently “controlled by Russian-Israeli billionaire Michael Mirilashvili,” vice president of the World Jewish Congress.

Among the many reasons the technology is so vital, we are told, is that some 1.2 billion people - nearly one-fifth of the Earth's residents - live in areas of water scarcity, according to United Nations figures.

The UN website notes that an additional 500 million people are “approaching this situation, [and] another 1.6 billion... face economic water shortage (where countries lack the necessary infrastructure to take water from rivers and aquifers)”.

The Water-Gen website meanwhile adds that “water is still the world's number one concern, as un-safe water kills more people than [sic] wars”.

Given that Israel has never exhibited any detectable qualms either about denying Palestinians access to safe water or about killing them, the image of Israel as aqua-messiah is, to put it mildly, a bit hard to swallow.

Consider a Jerusalem Post article published the very same day (16 April) as the Times of Israel piece on Water-Gen's global thirst-quenching mission.

The Post reports on the dire situation in the Gaza Strip, where fresh water is “a scarce commodity” and where recurring electricity crises are not helped by the fact that “damage from the Israeli bombing of the [Gaza power] plant in 2014 has yet to be fully repaired”.

The article quotes Robert Piper, the UN's Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, who warns that the latest severe electricity crisis could help unleash a “perfect storm” that results in a Gaza Strip that is fundamentally uninhabitable - a conundrum, no doubt, for the two million people that reside there.

The Post continues: “When looking at the larger picture of the crisis, Piper was clear that the primary cause is the restrictions on the freedom of movement of goods and people through the three crossings into the Strip, which have made a viable economy impossible.”

When it rains . . .

Israel, on the other hand, has found plenty of lucrative economic opportunities in Palestinian repression - with Israeli security tricks and other punitive expertise marketed far and wide. (Water-Gen, for its part, is apparently also off to a good start, having recently signed deals with both India and Vietnam)

And while the West Bank may not lie on the direct path of the perfect storm threatening Gaza, the territory is hardly exempt from repression and plunder.

There, Israeli-imposed water hardships have ranged from prohibitive fees for Palestinian communities to drastic supply cuts to outright theft of Palestinian water for use in hydrating illegal Israeli settlers and filling their swimming pools and other accoutrements.

In an email to me back in 2013, West Bank-based environmental expert Alice Gray highlighted some additional clever Israeli manoeuvres in the area, such as “preventing

Palestinians from building sewage treatment plants... and then prosecuting them under international law for cross-border pollution".

The previous year, an Oxfam briefing paper titled "On the Brink" noted that "water cisterns used by Palestinian farmers to collect rainwater are frequently demolished by the Israeli authorities, further limiting their ability to grow crops".

In other words: when it rains it pours.

Total whitewash

But back to Water-Gen, whose new campaign has created more occasions for idioms - in the March Times of Israel headline: "At AIPAC, Dershowitz pulls water out of thin air."

The character in question was, of course, former Harvard Law School professor Alan Dershowitz, tasked with an on-stage demonstration of Water-Gen technology at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee's annual policy conference in Washington, DC.

Dershowitz's previous magic tricks include concocting a "continuum of civilianity" to provide legal justification for killing certain kinds of Arab civilians - as well as other behaviour suggesting that his place of employment might have been more aptly titled Harvard Psychiatric Ward.

As part of his AIPAC performance, Dershowitz effectively promoted Water-Gen to the frontlines of the battle against the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement for Palestinian rights:

"I believe that there is no weapon more powerful in the fight against BDS than for Israel to develop technologies that the world cannot live without... You cannot boycott products that you can't live without."

In sum, it seems it's not so much about nobly rescuing a hapless, thirsty planet. It's about securing Israel's image and with it its highly profitable spot in the international order - using water from thin air to whitewash a system of institutionalized apartheid and ethnic cleansing.

And that, surely, is something we can all live without.

26/04/2017 online at: <http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/blowing-israel-s-aqua-shenanigans-out-water-407097625>

### **Israel Cuts Water Supply to Jordan Valley Village**

On Thursday morning, Israeli bulldozers destroyed all pipelines supplying water to Bardala village in the Jordan Valley, leaving approximately 3,500 villagers without water.

According to the PNN, Mutaz Bisharat told news reporters that Israeli bulldozers, military jeeps and Israeli Civil Administration officials were behind the destruction of the pipelines.

The pipelines were destroyed under the accusation that they were being used to steal water with the intention of using it for growing agriculture.

Water resources in Palestine and Israel were supposed to be governed by the main principles of international law, as the right to water and sanitation is an individual basic human right.

Some estimates say that Israel uses 85% of the total water exclusively for the Israeli use, including use in the illegal settlements across the West Bank. This leaves only 15% for Palestinian use. The average Palestinian lives on an average of 73 liters of water per day, World Health Organisation (WHO) proclaims that the minimum water requirement per person per day is 100 liters.

28/04/2017 online at: <http://imemc.org/article/israel-cuts-water-supply-to-jordan-valley-village/>

### **Israel's Water War – Bulldozers Destroy Pipelines Supplying Water to Palestinian Village**

Water is the most precious resource of the world. It is also the scarcest. Especially water suitable for human consumption is not evenly distributed around the world and a lot of communities face severe shortfalls. Some of these shortfalls are experienced by inhabitants of those regions simply due to natural distribution but others are purely due to mismanagement and regional conflicts. The Israel-Palestine conflict has occasionally involved water resources of the area. In fact, some quarters believe water could be the key to settling the Israel-Palestine dispute for good measure.

Israeli settlers and authorities have time and again created unwarranted water crisis in the area for Palestinians which can easily be avoided and water resources can be shared by settlers and Palestinians if properly managed. On Thursday, officials of Israel's civil administration arrived in the northern occupied West Bank district of Tubas with bulldozers accompanied by Israeli soldiers to destroy water pipelines providing water to the village of Bardala. This has left around 3,500 village dwellers without water. This hasn't been a new occurrence. Earlier this year, Israeli forces destroyed a water pipeline running between the Bedouin communities of Al-Hadidiya and Al-Ras Al-Ahmar in the northern Jordan Valley, east of the Tubas district.

Palestinian officials who monitor settlement activity in the Jordan Valley stated that Israeli forces claimed and are wrongly accusing residents in the village of stealing water through the lines in order to use the water for agriculture and farming. The officials said Israel does not provide enough water for Palestinians because the Government wants to rid the land of Palestinians.

The Oslo accords created a Joint Water Management Committee, which grants Israel a veto over water resource and infrastructure in the West Bank. The committee issued a joint declaration in 2001 for keeping water infrastructure out of the cycle of violence. The Emergency Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene group (EWASH), a multinational consortium of NGOs funded by the European commission, accuses Israel of breaking this declaration.

The Palestinian Water Authority has been constantly condemning the demolition of cisterns as a violation of numerous bilateral agreements and declarations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Amnesty International estimates that up to 200,000 Palestinians in the West Bank do not have access to running water.

Earlier this year, Israeli forces destroyed a UNICEF-funded water pipeline in the West Bank.

“We should be using water as a tool for peace and to bridge the gap of confidence in the region – not to create a water crisis,” stated Nader Al-Khateeb, the Palestinian director of the environmental NGO Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME).

The water battle with Israel can be dated back to 1982, as most villagers in the area believe, when Ariel Sharon, the then minister of defense, transferred all the West Bank water systems to Mekorot, the Israeli national water company for the nominal price of one shekel.

Israel, on the other hand, denies there is any water crisis and officials turn a blind eye to the destruction of water resources of the Palestinians by the Israeli soldiers and settlers alike. Settlers go as far as poisoning Palestinian wells with chicken carcasses when they are unable to do any other damage. Israeli officials state they are doing enough for providing water and that the Arabs in the area should make the most of the water infrastructure developments Israeli authorities are doing in the area.

02/05/2017 online at: <http://factschronicle.com/israels-water-war-bulldozers-destroy-pipelines-supplying-water-to-palestinian-village-1874.html>

### **98 per cent in Oman will have access to water by 2020**

Ninety-eight per cent of the Sultanate’s population will have access to water by 2020, according to a top official at Public Authority of Electricity and Water (PAEW).

Giving the inaugural speech at the Oman Energy and Water exhibition and Conference, Ali Al Ghafri, Vice President of PAEW highlighted Oman’s initiatives in developing a good supply of water and electricity.

“We have allocated \$3 billion for 12 projects from 2012 to 2019 in Musandam, Salalah, Duqm and Sohar. We have a production capacity of 1.15 million cubic metres and expect it to increase by 10 per cent every year. By 2020, we will have covered 98 per cent of the population with water supply,” Al Ghafri said.

PAEW also plans to have an extra 67,000 cubic meter water supply from 2018-2020 and a 577 km water network in the next few years.

“We plan extra water supply and storage facilities in places like Khasab, Duqm and Wadi Dhaika in case of shortage of water,” he added.

According to Ghafri, PAEW plans to develop the renewable sector in the country to enhance electricity production, which covers 90 per cent of the population already.

“We plan to encourage the private sector in taking part in our initiatives by investing into our projects. We expect electricity demand to grow at 11 per cent every in the Sultanate, which would mean there is a lot of potential in it,” he said.

According to Markus Erich Strohmeier, CEO Siemens Oman, Oman must concentrate on storing energy instead of only generating it for consumers.

“I believe the future lies in energy storage. Soon we will produce too much energy for us to consume and will have to look for ways to store it so when there is a disruption in supply we can use this energy. It presents a world of opportunities as solar power becomes cheaper in the future. This is going to be the future of energy,” he said.

He added that Siemens is committed to increasing efficiency of power and water plants in the country.

01/05/2017 online at: <http://timesofoman.com/article/108125/Oman/Science-/98-per-cent-in-Oman-will-have-access-to-water-by-2020>

### **Sisi seeks agreement to regulate filling Renaissance Dam with Nile water**

President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said that an agreement must be reached on the regulations governing the filling of the Renaissance Dam with Nile water, in accordance with the Declaration of Principles signed in Khartoum.

He also stressed the need for continuing cooperation between Egypt and Ethiopia to ensure the optimum utilization of the shared water resources between the Nile Basin countries in a way that achieves development.

At a meeting with the Ethiopian Foreign Minister Workneh Gebeyehu on Wednesday afternoon and Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry, Sisi referred to the importance of positive communication with the company responsible for conducting studies on the Renaissance Dam so as to finish these studies as soon as possible.

Gebeyehu relayed Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn's salutations to Sisi and gave him a letter from Desalegn, stressing his keenness to develop and deepen relations with Egypt on all levels, presidency spokesperson Alaa Youssef said in a statement.

The letter praised the development of Egypt-Ethiopia communication over the past three years.

Sisi said he hopes to hold the joint high committee between the two countries in Cairo soon and to welcome Desalegn to Egypt to discuss means of developing bilateral relations at various levels. He also stressed that Egypt's foreign policy is based on establishing balanced and open relations with all countries, pointing out that Egypt does not conspire nor interfere in the affairs of other countries.

The Egyptian and Ethiopian foreign ministers agreed to hold regular meetings between Cairo and Addis Ababa every two months to build confidence in one another and eliminate any tension that could affect the course of the joint relations.

Gebeyehu said the Ethiopian people and government do not intend to harm the people of Egypt, pointing out that he assured Sisi and Shoukry that Ethiopia will not work against the interests of Egypt.

20/04/2017 online at: <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/sisi-seeks-agreement-regulate-filling-renaissance-dam-nile-water>

### **HCWW negotiates to finance Lake Qaroun project with €300m**

The Holding Company for Water & Wastewater (HCWW) is currently negotiating with the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) to finance the wastewater project and the restoration of Lake Qaroun at a cost of €300m.

Mamdouh Raslan, chairperson of HCWW, said that the project aims to build a number of new sewage stations in the surrounding areas of Lake Qaroun, along with the maintenance and expansion of old stations to prevent sewage from mixing with the lake waters, which contributes to improving the water quality and the ecosystem in the lake, in addition to encouraging tourism.

He added that a tender will be posed to choose a consultant for the project within two months. This consultant will prepare technical and financial feasibility studies and review the specifications and standards for the implementation of the project. The project will be established within five years.

He explained that the problem of sewage is one of the most important problems of the development of Lake Qaroun, which is one of the most important tourist attractions in Egypt. He added that the lake generates about 800,000 tones of salt annually, 300,000 tones of which are extracted, while there is ongoing coordination with a major company to establish a plant to extract yet more salt from the lake.

Raslan said that 85% of villages nationwide need sewage networks at a cost of up to EGP 200bn.

The HCWW has received several external loans from international bodies to improve drinking water and sanitation services, including the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the French Development Agency, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

He pointed out that 85% of drinking water is sourced from the Nile, 14% from underground resources, and 1% from desalination plants, adding that the company is implementing a EGP 1bn project to replace and renew the water pipeline.

He pointed out that the quality of the drinking water in Egypt is on the top of the government's priorities, adding that several laboratories and quality control facilities have recently been established under the supervision of the ministries of housing, health, irrigation, and environment.

23/04/2017 online at: <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/04/23/hcww-negotiates-finance-lake-qaroun-project-e300m/>

### **After seven-year absence, Will Egypt return to Nile Basin Initiative?**

After seven years during which Egypt froze its membership in the Nile Basin Initiative to object to the Entebbe Agreement — which does not recognize Egypt's historical annual water quota from the Nile River and gives upstream countries the right to build dams without any prior notice — the Egyptian team handling the Nile water issue at the Foreign Ministry and Water Resources Ministry embarked on a round of negotiations that started with an extraordinary ministerial meeting in Uganda on March 29 and aimed to find a formula of understanding that satisfies all parties and paves the way for Egypt's return to the Nile Basin Initiative. This comes ahead of the Nile Summit scheduled for June in Uganda.

The Egyptian decision to return to the initiative remains dependent on canceling the legal effects of the unilateral signature by the Nile upstream states on the cooperative framework agreement (CFA) known in the media as the Entebbe Agreement.

However, in light of the insistence by the Nile upstream states on the CFA, the first round of negotiations ended without any agreement being reached, as Egypt requested more time to review its report on its concerns.

In an interview with Al-Monitor, an Egyptian diplomatic source familiar with the Nile Basin issue said, "The political administration is now adopting policies to support its presence in the regional environment in Africa in order to secure Egyptian interests. We have a clear vision that the Nile basin issue is the key issue underlying Egypt's role in Africa. Egypt will not promote its African bilateral relations or have a greater influence within the African regional organizations unless the dispute with the Nile upstream countries on the management of water in the river is resolved."

The source added, "This approach motivated the political administration to resolve the dispute with Ethiopia on the Renaissance Dam by signing a declaration of principles for confidence-building. But the Egyptian position this time is complex. Some within the team that manages the issue do not want to return to the initiative unless a legal breakthrough guarantees Egypt's water interests in the Nile or the Nile upstream countries agree to discuss the Entebbe agreement and amend the controversial clauses rejected by Egypt. Otherwise, Egypt's seven-year freeze of its membership would have been useless."

Egypt froze its membership in the Nile Basin Initiative in June 2010 to object to the signature by six Nile upstream states on the CFA, which includes three controversial clauses rejected by Egypt.

Indeed, Egypt wants to amend Clause 14(b) on Water Security, as the country seeks to obtain its historical quota of Nile water, estimated at 55.5 billion cubic meters (45 million acre-feet) in accordance with the 1959 Convention. It also wants to amend Clause 12 so as to oblige upstream countries to notify it before starting any project along the Nile. Egypt also want to amend Clause 46 on voting so that decisions are issued unanimously instead of by a majority to prevent the formation of blocs among the countries opposing Egyptian interests, especially since there is a firm belief that Cairo alone has the lion's share of water.

The source said, “During the ministerial meeting we presented a detailed technical and legal report on the geological and hydraulic state of the river that explains the Egyptian vision of water management according to the international rules governing transboundary rivers, which confirms that the positions of Cairo are backed by international law and not based on political intransigence against cooperation with Nile riparian countries.”

“We know that persuading the riparian states to modify the Entebbe agreement is difficult, but they know very well the importance and strength of the impact of the Egyptian presence,” the source added.

The source further said there were several initiatives and attempts to convince Egypt to return to the initiative, especially since the freezing of its membership caused financial losses and suspended numerous aid programs granted by international partners, mainly the World Bank, to support the Nile Basin Initiative.

The source continued, “Egypt seeks an agreement on a legal document signed by the heads of states, including a number of principles governing the management of the Nile water, and setting the main lines of cooperation and decision-making mechanisms in relation to any project on the river, whose legal effects would be as binding as those of the Entebbe agreement, which has yet to be final, as not all signatory countries have concluded their ratification procedures.”

The diplomatic viewpoint differed with that of the technical authorities involved in the management of the file in Egypt, such as the Egyptian Water Resources Ministry. The committees believe in the inevitability of reaching an agreement with the Nile Basin countries and that the continuation of the freeze is not in the best interest of any of the parties. The advocates of this position are pushing for the return of Egypt to the NBI without entering into legal and political mazes that will further exacerbate the dispute between Cairo and the upstream states.

A Nile Basin technical official from the Egyptian Water Resources Ministry told Al-Monitor on condition of anonymity, “The freezing of Egypt's NBI membership had some negative effects, such as the lack of activities and projects, the lack of databases on the riparian countries' projects on the river and the spread of false information on Egypt’s Nile water uses and requirements. Thus, the freeze made Egypt loses an important platform through which it can defend its water interests.”

It seems that Sisi's administration is now seeking coordination with some allied countries from among the Nile upstream states to try to influence the positions of other countries, such as Uganda, Kenya and South Sudan.

Amani El Tawil, head of the Africa and Nile Basin Studies Unit at Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, told Al-Monitor, "The political administration is trying to fix its relations with the Nile riparian states. It started with two steps, the first of which was direct contact with Kenya on Feb. 18 and Uganda on Dec. 18, 2016, during the last two visits of President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, and the second was the rapprochement with Eritrea, Ethiopia's rival, and coordination with South Sudan, Sudan's rival."

In light of converging opinions among the Egyptian team handling the Nile Basin issue on the decision to return to the NBI, several factors are pushing Cairo to take a quick decision that guarantees its water interests from the Nile River. Egypt's seven-year long absence has only led to intransigent positions by upstream states. In parallel, Ethiopia is about to finish its construction of the Renaissance Dam, a potential threat to Egyptian water security. Sisi has been in power for three years now, and no agreement has been reached with Ethiopia on issues of water storage and the Renaissance Dam operation.

24/04/2017 online at: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/04/egypt-water-share-dispute-nile-basin-initiative-obstacles.html>

### **Punjab to study water flowing into Pakistan**

Caught up in a water war with neighboring Haryana, the Punjab government has sought a report on the water flowing from the state to Pakistan.

Punjab Irrigation and Power Minister Rana Gurjeet Singh on Wednesday asked officers of the Irrigation Department to make a consolidated report on the water flowing to Pakistan from the state.

He also issued instructions to make a strategy to tap these resources for meeting irrigation requirements of the state, a state government spokesman said here.

During a review meeting with the Irrigation Department here on Wednesday, the Minister stressed on the need of strengthening the mechanism to tap water flowing to Pakistan.

"The Punjab government would make its best efforts to make optimal utilization of this water to meet irrigation and other water requirements of the state," he said.

Water from river Sutlej, Beas and Ravi flows from Punjab towards Pakistan.

In the past one year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had stated that the Indus Water Treaty with Pakistan would be reviewed.

He said the farmers in Punjab and Haryana had more claim to the water from rivers flowing in India than allowing the water to flow into Pakistan.

26/04/2017 online at: <http://zeenews.india.com/punjab/punjab-to-study-water-flowing-into-pakistan-1999740.html>

### **Pakistan's India obsession hides its real water challenges**

Over the past few months, with the deterioration of relations between Pakistan and India, there has been a renewed interest in the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT). Statements made from India seem to indicate a shift in approach regarding water sharing in the Indus basin. There has been extensive discussion and speculation on the implications of India's 'new policy' and what it means for Pakistan's water resources.

However, a proper sense of perspective of this problem relative to Pakistan's water resources seems to be lacking in much of these discussions and commentaries. Not only has the media coverage been disproportionately directed towards this issue, it has often been hyperbolic and misleading. Take for example, the coverage of a speech where the Indian PM said, "The fields of our farmers must have adequate water. Water that belongs to India cannot be allowed to go to Pakistan... The government will do everything to provide enough water to our farmers."

This statement was portrayed in Pakistan as an aggressive threat by India to 'divert' or 'stop' water flow to Pakistan. Setting aside the fact that India doesn't have the infrastructure to have any appreciable impact on water flows entering Pakistan, nor will it in the near future, what most of the coverage failed to acknowledge was that PM Narendra Modi was talking about utilizing the flows on the eastern rivers that have anyway been apportioned to India under the IWT.

It is also important to remember that he was making these statements in the run-up to important elections (South Asian politicians using water issues to garner votes is nothing new). What was essentially electioneering was made out to be a threat to the sanctity of the IWT by many in Pakistan.

Missing the important while highlighting the innocuous

It is this approach of viewing its problems from an India-centric prism that has prevented Pakistan from addressing its actual challenges. Valid Pakistani concerns regarding the hydropower infrastructure being built by India on the western rivers (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab) is what the media coverage should focus on. Linking these genuine concerns with innocuous political statements made across the border only serves to distract from the main problem, and perpetuates the narrative of 'India stealing Pakistan's water'.

Not only is this narrative misleading, it also distracts political and public efforts in Pakistan from focusing on more pressing domestic water challenges that, if not resolved soon, may impact food and energy security in Pakistan significantly more than any upstream Indian hydropower projects can.

The political and administrative effort devoted to potential Indian violations of the IWT is disproportionate to its actual impact on water resources in Pakistan. Pakistan has several other water challenges that deserve significantly more attention. As a starting point, a much more

fruitful Endeavour would be to address the interprovincial water management conflicts that have significantly hampered much needed water resources development in the country.

No focus on internal, inter-regional water sharing

Ironic is the only word to describe the current affair of Pakistan's water management where Pakistan accuses its neighbor of violating a treaty while its own provinces feud bitterly over their own water sharing accord.

In the last few weeks alone, the chief minister of Sind held a press conference demanding control of the major reservoirs, Balochistan blamed Sind for not providing water, while the grievances of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) regarding not receiving its due share of water-related benefits from the federal government were aired.

On paper, there exists an agreement between the provinces regarding sharing of the country's water resources, commonly referred to as the IRSA (Indus River System Authority) Accord. While it was celebrated as a sign of provincial unity when it was signed in 1991, it has proven to be anything but. Its imprecise language and lack of clearly stated rules of operation meant that discord began to brew soon after the Accord was agreed upon, with provinces trading allegations of breach of agreement ever since.

These allegations are as serious as they are predictable with the provincial bickering peaking every year in March and April with the start of the summer sowing season. Often, discussions regarding major water management decisions in Pakistan (e.g. sharing of water or benefits associated with water or construction of major water infrastructure) are hindered not due to technical or economic concerns, but political ones.

Neither reliable data, nor transparency in its collection

A related challenge plaguing water management in Pakistan is a lack of reliable measurements of the various components of the water budget such as rainfall or streamflow, and a lack of transparency regarding the ways this data is collected. In fact, one may argue that this lack of reliable data collection and sharing underlies many of the interprovincial conflicts.

Nonetheless, there is still an appreciable amount of data for flows and diversions at major barrages and canals that is recorded by the provincial irrigation departments of the respective provinces. Unfortunately, whatever data is available is often not shared, or is deliberately fudged by provinces, adding to the lack of transparency and feeling of mistrust.

Water allocations between provinces are made by IRSA based on water availability in a given year, which is determined by the inflows, storage and outflows from the Indus basin. However, according to IRSA's own figures (accessed by the author, but not in public domain), almost a quarter of the water inflows into the country are unaccounted for!

Pakistan's inability to develop any major water storage infrastructure in the past 40 years is also partly rooted in this lack of reliable streamflow measurements, with the provinces not able to agree on basic facts such as the magnitude of streamflow into the Indus delta.

Many independent experts have argued that it is imperative that Pakistan establish a transparent and impartial system for water management between provinces. That can only be possible with the availability of transparent, easily accessible, and rigorous calibrated measurements of water inflows, storage and outflows.

There are signs that water management in the country is perhaps moving in the right direction. A new National Water Policy, dealing with the issues mentioned above and many others, has been devised and is in the process of being implemented. It remains to be seen how effective the policy is at improving interprovincial cooperation.

Solving Pakistan's major water challenges requires concerted political effort and increased public awareness. It will be impossible to achieve this if we are constantly distracted by the hyperbolic smokescreen of 'India stealing Pakistan's water'.

27/04/2017 online at: <https://www.thethirdpole.net/2017/04/27/pakistans-india-obsession-hides-its-real-water-challenges/>

### **Pakistan, Italy sign clean water MoU for KP**

Pakistan and Italy have signed an agreement on Wash projects for provision of clean and quality drinking water for southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) under RAHA through Pakistan Italian Debt Swap Agreement (PIDSA).

The agreement was signed by Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) Lt. Gen (R) Abdul Qadir Baloch and Italian Ambassador in Pakistan Stefano Pontecorvo, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

Under the RAHA Program, the drinking water needs of the hosting community and afghan refugees residing in southern districts of KP would be met. It was proposed that 8 solarized water supply schemes were presented as unitary project aiming at improving water use efficiency and quality drinking water in southern districts of KP including Lakki Marwat, DI Khan, Bannu and Tank through Government Line departments. The total cost of projects is Rs 150.341 Million.

The minister appreciated the initiative taken by the Italian government and said such projects would greatly benefit the residents of the southern districts of KP, as there were considerable number of Afghan refugees residing in those areas.

But since these districts could not get the necessary funding. Also the availability of clean drinking water was a major issue in those areas and the Italian government initiative would be very helpful in improving the conditions of the host communities. The Italian Ambassador

lauded the efforts of Pakistan in hosting the huge number of Afghan refugees and pledged to further extended the cooperation in other areas also.

Under the Framework of the One UN in Pakistan, goal of Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) is to benefit the communities and to support host communities and Afghan refugees through humanitarian projects in targeted districts throughout Pakistan resulting in social cohesion and harmony between the said communities.

28/04/2017 online at: <http://pakobserver.net/pakistan-italy-sign-clean-water-mou-kp/>