



ORSAM WATER BULLETIN

Weekly Bulletin by ORSAM Water Research Programme

Events-News-Politics-Projects-Environment-ClimateChange-Neighbourhoods-Cooperation-Disputes-Scarcity and more



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04 July 2017 - 10 July 2017

Calls for long term water management plan as flow from Iran not fully restored

A Kurdish official estimated on Monday that Iran has released only a small little amount of the water flow of the Little Zab River, or Zei Bchuk, it cut late last month.

“The released water does not even amount to 7 percent of the Zei Bchuk water,” said Mohamed Hassan, water manager in the border town of Qaladze.

Iran cut the flow of the river by 80 percent on June 22, but said on Monday that it would restore the water flow after the Kurdistan Region decreased water flows to south and central Iraq.

Hassan estimated that the water flow has decreased by 14 cubic meters per second.

Bakir Bazi, Qaladze mayor, said they were informed Monday evening by the mayor of Sardasht in Iran that they had “released an amount of water.”

“The water has entered the Kurdistan Region, but it has not reached here yet. I predict in the next few hours, it will arrive,” Bazi said.

Cutting the water “created lots of problems on humanitarian and agricultural levels and for fish-farming projects,” Bazi detailed, describing it as an “environmental disaster” for the aquatic life in the river.

Farmers were also affected, with many experiencing a shortage of water to irrigate their land. Well water levels around the Zei Bchuk area dropped “and many of them have dried up,” Bazi explained.

He said if Iranian authorities continue to block the water flow of Little Zab River, it will damage Dukan Lake, all the way down to Kirkuk city and even southern Iraqi cities.

Hassan warned that, even if Iran does fully restore the water flow, it is necessary to “have short term and long term” contingency plans.

One of the plans is to expand an existing barrier, he explained, “This barrier has to be made bigger to become a mini-dam to store water.”

To prevent future shortages, he suggested they “make a canal and a door to control the storage of water. When we have excess, we will release it. This is our current plan.”

He also urged repair work to existing water infrastructure “as soon as possible.”

Hassan would also like to see increased efforts to conserve water. He noted that 95 percent of homes in Qaladze have been fitted with water meters, “but they do not work.”

The construction of a dam on Zei Bchuk River in Iran’s Kurdish city of Sardasht to produce hydroelectric power resulted in the stem of water flow into Kurdistan Region’s border town

Qaladze, leading to an 80 percent reduction of water flow into the Khas water project and depriving 80,000 people of water.

In response, the Kurdistan Region partially cut water flow to south and central Iraq. Abdulstar Majeed, minister for agriculture and water, said the decision was “forced” on them in order to provide water for Kurdistan Region citizens.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Monday the region is a “family” and should solve problems like dam construction while weighing its impact.

“Regional and international organizations should not be indifferent to environmental damages in Iraq and Iran caused by dam construction in neighboring countries,” Rouhani said on Monday at the International Conference on Combating Sand and Dust Storms.

The important region of Middle East and West Asia is a family,” said the President of the Islamic Republic. “We must aim at having a more powerful region instead being the most powerful country in the region.”

04/07/2017 online at: <http://www.rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/040720172>

Iran stops flow of Second River into Kurdistan

Iran has fully stopped the flow of Alwand River, which crosses the border into the Kurdistan Region near the southern city of Khanaqin.

Ahmed Wasan, director of the Khanaqin’s Alwand dam, told Rudaw, “Every year between June 1 and October 1 since 2003, the Islamic Republic of Iran restricts the flow of a large quantity of the Alwand because it needs the water.”

He said this water stoppage is “not political.”

Iran does not cut the water flow in winter when there are heavy rains, Wasan explained.

Alwand dam has the capacity to store 37 million cubic meters of water. “Now it holds 30 million cubic meters of water,” Wasan said. “It will last until the end of the year.”

The area relies on the dam for water for drinking and irrigation. There are some 145 farms and five fish projects dependent on the water.

Wasan warned that if the river’s water is not released next year, Alwand dam will be dry in the summer months, “because to fill the dam 100 percent depends on Alwand’s water,” which comes from Iran.

Near Alwand dam, a second dam is being built. “Now we are building Qamishanin dam near Alwand dam. All of the technical work has been completed, but the Iraqi government stopped it due to financial problems,” Wasan said.

Earlier this week, Iranian officials said they would restore the waters of the Zei Bchuk, or Little Zab River, after cutting it in June. The Kurdistan Region sought to put pressure on Iran

by reducing water flow into Iraq, with Kurdish officials saying they had to prioritize providing water for their own people.

06/07/2017 online at: <http://www.rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/060720175>

In Daesh-held Raqqa, parched civilians risk lives for water

Syria's Raqqa once thrived on the banks of the gushing Euphrates River, but dire shortages in the Daesh stronghold are forcing desperate civilians to risk their lives for water.

The northern city has been without steady running water for several weeks after damage to pipelines by heavy bombardment, including suspected strikes by the US-led coalition.

Civilians dehydrated by the blistering summer heat are venturing out to the Euphrates and makeshift wells around the city.

But as fighting between Daesh and advancing US-backed forces ramps up, that journey can be life-threatening.

"I went to pump water from a well in the city's south, close to the river," said Karim, an activist with the Raqqa24 network who remains inside the city.

He spoke to AFP using a pseudonym for fear of being targeted by Daesh, which still controls most of Raqqa.

The terrorists had sealed the street between the southern district and the Euphrates, so he and other men gathered around a borehole drilled by a resident.

"We were able to get water for an hour, but then we had to run away because of artillery fire. A shell landed just 50 meters away from me," he said.

He described a hellish scene: families lugging jerry cans through Raqqa's streets, suddenly scrambling for cover from incoming mortar fire and air strikes.

Civilians who managed to escape Raqqa have also told AFP they came under Daesh sniper fire as they tried to fill up buckets from the Euphrates.

With temperatures reaching a scorching 46 degrees Celsius, Karim said Raqqa residents are caught between their extreme thirst and the risky journey to quench it.

"The shortages are killing us. Cold water is the stuff of dreams."

'Dying of thirst'

Since Daesh overran Raqqa in 2014, the city has become synonymous with the group's horrific practices, including public beheadings.

With help from the US-led coalition, an alliance of Kurdish and Arab fighters called the Syrian Democratic Forces is waging a fierce assault to oust Daesh from the city.

Years ago, Raqqa benefited from its prime location in the fertile river valley, as well as from nearby hydroelectric dams that generated power for much of Syria.

That makes the current water shortages particularly painful, said activist collective Raqqa Is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS).

“The deepest irony lies in the fact that this city on the bank of the bountiful Euphrates River is currently dying of thirst,” said the group, whose members publish news from activists inside the city.

According to RBSS, at least 27 people have been killed by coalition air strikes in recent weeks as they tried to reach the Euphrates or nearby wells for water.

“My uncle and seven children were killed about two weeks ago as he was heading to a school near the city centre where there was a well,” said RBSS co-founder Abdul Aziz Al Hamza.

And those who manage to successfully draw water from the Euphrates also face health risks.

The UN warned earlier this month that Euphrates River water was potentially “unfit for consumption” and carried “the risk of waterborne diseases”.

“Raqqa’s population is using the water for everything — showers, drinking, everything,” said RBSS activist Hussam Eisa.

“But it isn’t clean, particularly because of all the (mortar) shells and corpses that are in it,” Eisa told AFP.

RBSS says it has documented symptoms of waterborne diseases among those who are drinking the river water, including fever and loss of consciousness that the group fears could point to cholera.

The World Health Organization has also documented one child who was paralyzed in Raqqa by a strain of polio that originates from a vaccine carrying small amounts of weakened but live virus.

Oral polio vaccine (OPV) replicates in the gut and can be passed to others through faecal-contaminated water — meaning it won’t hurt the vaccinated individual, but could infect their neighbors in places where hygiene and immunization levels are low.

08/07/2017 online at: <http://gulfnews.com/news/mena/iraq/in-daesh-held-raqqa-parched-civilians-risk-lives-for-water-1.2054919>

Water use innovations crucial to face climate change in Arab countries

Arab states must continue to seek innovations to overcome water scarcity in the face of climate change, said UN Food and Agriculture Organization Director-General José Graziano da Silva at an event co-hosted by the Arab League on the sidelines of FAO's biennial Conference.

In the Near East and North Africa region, the per capita renewable water availability is around 600 cubic meters per person per year - only 10 percent of the world average - and drops to just 100 cubic meters in some countries.

The Director-General praised Near East and North African countries' progress, despite the challenges, in areas such as desalination, water harvesting, drip irrigation and treating wastewater.

"It is fundamental to promote ways for agriculture, and food production in general, to use less water, and use it more efficiently," he said. "Population growth and the impacts of climate change will put more pressure on water availability in the near future. Climate change, in particular, poses very serious risks."

Farmers and rural households should be at the center of strategies to address water scarcity, Graziano da Silva said. "Not only to encourage them to adopt more efficient farming technologies, but also to secure access to drinking water for poor rural households. This is vital for food security and improved nutrition."

Agriculture accounts for more than 80 percent of all freshwater withdrawals in the region, reaching peaks above 90 percent in some countries including Yemen and Syria. Sustainable and efficient water management practices in agriculture are therefore key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goal of Zero Hunger.

"The future of the Arab region is tightly linked to the problem of water scarcity," said the Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Abul-Gheith. "There is a major gap between supply and demand when it comes not only to water but also food in the Arab region. This gap leads to dire political, economic and security consequences."

He also urged better collaboration with countries that are home to rivers that flow into the region, and noted that water levels in the Euphrates and Nile Rivers are decreasing steadily.

Climate change to compound water scarcity

Unrestrained demand for water for agriculture in the region has led to groundwater over-drafting, declines in water quality and land degradation including salinization. Climate change is expected to compound these trends and agriculture will be one of the hardest hit sectors.

More frequent and intense heat waves and reduced rainfall will curb growing seasons. With less rain, there will be a reduction in soil moisture, river runoff and aquifer recharge. Increased uncertainty will affect productivity, and make agricultural planning more difficult.

FAO in Action

In collaboration with the Arab League, FAO launched a Regional Initiative on Water Scarcity in the Near East in 2013 which supports the coordination of a Regional Collaborative Strategy.

Building on this, FAO launched a Global Framework, Coping with water scarcity in agriculture, at COP 22 in Marrakesh last year. It encourages cooperation among stakeholders and will help develop technology and governance based on good science.

04/07/2017 online at: <http://reliefweb.int/report/world/water-use-innovations-crucial-face-climate-change-arab-countries>

Intl. dialogue on water conflicts to improve regional security

Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme Erik Solheim said that the solution to environmental conflicts should be according to knowledge-based dialogue between nations which would help improve the security of the region.

International Conference on Sand and Dust Storms kicked off on Monday in Tehran to consider the establishment of a global platform for policy dialogue and coordination on sand and dust storms and to contribute to knowledge-sharing on policies and best practices and capacity building to resolve issues related to dust and sand storms which have arguably become the most pressing environmental problem affecting the Middle East, with major dust storm hotspots in Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia exacerbating an otherwise normal phenomenon.

For this purpose, Mehr News conducted an exclusive interview with Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme Erik Solheim:

The events like International Conference on Combatting Dust and Sand would pave the way for joint statements, declarations and resolutions which are not normally legally binding. Are there any chances that the outcome of the currently ongoing conference would become a protocol?

It is a very important question. My perspective is that if we look at environmental issues and treaties in the past all these have been built stone upon stone. I'm just back from Japan. This year we will ratify the Minamata protocol [an international treaty designed to protect human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds] which by the way Iran was among the last countries to join the Minamata protocol. It was a long fight for many years to bring them together and now the entire world agreed that we all ban mercury. Another example from the past can be the hole in the ozone layer which is now close to being restored again which, too, took some time. So what we need to do is to build momentum to bring this to higher political level and to get more attention to sand and dust storms.

True, there are different views among the nations in the region. Some of these views are coming from different perspectives on sand and dust storms. In some other areas they have different foreign policies or perspectives on the crisis in the Syria whatever they may be. What we can do from the UN is to provide a platform for dialogue. We believe that the less politicized the dialogue the better and [likewise] the more we can remove other issues and focus on sand and dust storms the better. We [also] believe that the solution should be based

on science and the United Nation can provide the best available knowledge when there are disputes.

The main hotspots of sand and dust storms threatening Iran are located mostly in war-stricken areas such as Iraq and Syria who are also attending the event. Are there any hopes that UN Security Council would get involved and resolve the problem?

We must give full support to those who are given the task by the United Nation Security Council to do that and in case of Syria Staffan de Mistura [special] appointed envoy for Syria [crisis] who gets absolute support to [restore] peace and settlement in Syria. Iraq of course is much closer to a success. I think there is no doubt that Daesh will be eradicated from Iraq this year there are just small remaining fight in Mosul and different forces led by the government of Iraq will establish control over the [country]. True there might be terrorist attacks etc. in the future but there is hardly any doubt that in Iraq Daesh will be destroyed and it is very good news. Because all the areas controlled by Daesh both In Syria and Iraq have been hot spots for sand and dust storms and because when a government like the governments of Syria or Iraq have no control over their territories it would be very difficult for them to take the necessary measures.

We share some of the wetlands with other countries and as we witnessed it today there are some differences between some nations such as Iran and Turkey over Tigris and Euphrates. How UN is going to provide necessary protocols to change the current trend and force other governments to cooperate and respect water right of one another?

First of all I think we should consider these disputes as completely normal. I've hardly ever been in any country in the entire world where there are no disputes among those upstream and downstream. It is not just Tigris and Euphrates; there is Nile and also disputes among the states in India. So this is completely normal simply because you, Turkey and Iraq have different perspectives on Tigris and Euphrates.

If the parties want we can offer a mutual platform for resolving this through dialogue and we can offer the best potential mutual science which is established based on the facts to the extent that can be established and that will make it easier to resolve issues. Yet again it is for the sovereign nations to decide whether they want to use the United Nation's help. But we globally have very good experience from the fact that when nations are able to work together on resolving disputes over the rivers through science and dialogue those have positive overall impact on the security situation.

04/07/2017 online at: <http://en.mehrnews.com/news/126322/Intl-dialogue-on-water-conflicts-to-improve-regional-security>

Turkey's sovereign right on water use 'not a shareable commodity'

Turkish Ambassador to Iran Reza Hakan Tekin claimed that Turkey's dams on the Tigris and the Euphrates has no negative impact on the environment of the downstream countries.

In a letter signed by more than a hundred thousand people addressing UN secretary-general, Iranian environmental activists have voiced their protests to Turkey's numerous dam building projects on Tigris and Euphrates which have caused many sand and dust pollution in Iraq, Syria and Iran. The activists voiced concerns that Turkey does not respect the water rights of the downstream, and has caused dryness of ecosystems in the countries of Iraq and Syria with numerous damages on the Tigris and the Euphrates.

In an exclusive interview with Mehr News correspondent on the sidelines on the International Conference on Sand and Dust Storms that kicked off on Monday in Tehran, Reza Hakan Tekin said the latest data during years of scientific research in the decertified areas shows that Turkey has been "unfairly targeted for its dams and there has been a really minimal effects on the environment," and desert areas have not increased in the last 15, 20 years due to the dams in Turkey.

He also expressed Ankara is ready for the dialogue on water issues with the Islamic Republic; "We do not want any country to be targeted to any catastrophes, not especially on scientific grounds, so we are open to dialogue with Iran."

Following is the full text of his interview with Mehr News:

How would the International Conference on Combating Sand and Dust help the cooperation on behalf of Turkish government to take actions to respect the water rights of downstream rivers and wetlands?

The conference will serve the purpose of contributing all our joint efforts to resolve the problems which we all face in the region. Now the dams and the related projects that are being built in Turkey or already been built in Turkey has been targeted by some circles, including in Iran, as one of the main reasons which we experience in Iran or in other countries, but we are against these views, because we want to approach all these problems in a scientific way and our data shows that the dams built in Turkey on Tigris and Euphrates has no negative effect on environment in the downstream countries, in Iraq and Syria. To the country, these dams have regulated water so in the arid periods when there was no rain in the past there was no water coming to these countries so they were having draughts and it was negatively effecting the environment. But after the dams, we have the instruments to regulate water, we can give water even in dry seasons, we can give enough water to the downstream countries, so that they can use it for their own needs and also from another perspective, when there was extreme rainy periods, there were floods which also negatively affects the environment, so with the dams we can control the floods, so this is one thing; another thing when you look at the dust storms, the main source comes from already desert areas, not decertified areas, so when we look at last 15, 20 years of scientific data in the desertified areas, Turkey is being unfairly targeted for its dams and there has been a really minimal effects on the environment, so the desert areas have not increased in the last 15, 20 years due to the dams in Turkey.

On the other hand, when you look at the other projects inside Iraq, especially, during the Saddam's period, they dried the marshes and many parts of the country which resulted in a

big environmental catastrophe, which are one the primary reasons of the dust coming to Iran. Even in Iran, you look at the Tigris River, only 40% of the Tigris sources from turkey, 40% from Iraq and 10% from Iran. Iran has heavily constructed dams on Tigris water, I mean in Iran-Iraq border. So in the last 30 years, 600 dams were built by Iran and this is cutting the water from going to the wetlands of Iran. It is easy to criticize one country, but you should look at to your own policies too. We do not want any country to be targeted to any catastrophes, not especially on scientific grounds, so we are open to dialogue with Iran.

If with any chance, some independent organizations specify some measures of water rights for downstream rivers. Does Turkish government respect that water rights determined by international organizations?

You cannot give up your own sovereign rights. This is not a commodity to share with international organizations. What we have been doing, even when we are facing water shortage problems, we never cut water to neither in Tigris nor in Euphrates. So water is being given. Unfortunately Iraq and Syria are going through a very difficult period during the last decade. They are challenging with conflicts and instability, so we cannot get involved in joined projects with them. This conflict has further exacerbated the situation.

But many things effects the use of water and we are ready to contribute because water is very precious as one speaker today said now a bottle of water is more expensive than oil and some people say water is our right and you have to give us water, then some other people may say that water is more expensive than oil and why don't we share the oil. So it has the same logic. We should not look to the problem with that approach, we should look with common interests, which is fine and not overlook our own mistakes and continue them in using our water. Iran has diverted a lot of water from Ahwaz to Isfahan for industrial purposes and that has dried up Ahwaz and this is the fact.

06/07/2017 online at: <http://en.mehrnews.com/news/126324/Turkey-s-sovereign-right-on-water-use-not-a-shareable-commodity>

DOE Scraps Plan for Caspian Water Transfer

The plan to transfer water from Caspian Sea to the drought-hit central plateau has been called off due to its potential negative environmental effects.

“Inter-basin transfer has never been an effective solution anywhere in the world and therefore, the plan has been dropped,” said Parvin Farshchi, the deputy for marine environments at the Department of Environment, told the Persian daily Ettela’at.

The plan to transfer water through a 180-kilometer pipeline from Mazandaran Province to Semnan Province was seriously considered as a solution to meet the growing water demand in the agricultural, industrial and household sectors of the water-stressed province.

Critics, however, argued that pumping water from Caspian Sea would eventually lead to an increase in the sea’s salinity and endanger the habitats it supports.

They also said the pipeline would run through the Hyrcanian forests, necessitating the felling of trees in the ecologically-rich woodlands, which Iran hopes to inscribe on the World Heritage List in 2019. Some experts argued that given the low population of Semnan Province (approx. 600,000), there are less costly and more efficient ways of addressing the issue of water shortage, arguing that there are also “geopolitical factors” behind the push for building the expensive pipeline.

DOE officials always maintained that the plan was not environmentally justifiable.

However, dismissing arguments made by critics of the scheme, namely Massoumeh Ebtekar—the head of DOE, Parviz Kardovani, who is a prominent academic and eremologist (expert on deserts), claims that the plan “is one of the most feasible and financially-viable projects “.

Rain water harvesting, judicious water use (especially in the agro sector), promoting modern irrigation techniques, recycling wastewater, separating potable water from wastewater and implementing watershed plans are among measures suggested by experts to help conserve water.

06/07/2017 online at: <https://financialtribune.com/articles/people-environment/67741/doe-scraps-plan-for-caspian-water-transfer>

Water Crisis in Iran at Critical Level

The water supply in Iran has now reached an ultra critical level according to the Ministry of Energy’s Water and Wastewater Planning Office (WWPO).

Hedayat Fahmi, the Deputy Director of the WWPO, said that Iran has now used up nearly 90% of its renewable water resources meaning that the country is at serious risk of drought and other environmental crises.

Fahmi said: “If a country uses up to 40 percent of its renewable water resources, it’s considered to be in an acceptable state, but if the figure reaches 40-60 percent, then the country is faced with a water crisis. If, however, renewable water usage is between 60-80 percent, the country is in a critical water condition. A renewable water usage of more than 80 percent shows an ultra critical state, so that we could say that Iran with its 88 percent of renewable water usage is now in such a state.”

It is not just the fact that the Regime did not act to stop natural water resource from being depleted, there is also the issue of healthy water being polluted by wastewater.

Matter of National Security

This poses such an incredible threat to Iran that Alaeddin Boroujerdi, the head of the Iranian regime’s National Security and Foreign Policy Commission, has assessed that it is now a security issue and has formed a Water Security Committee in response.

Boroujerdi said: “The country has very limited water resources, so that we are among the world’s most water-stressed countries... Meanwhile, wastewater is pouring into many rivers across the country, thereby ruining the healthy water. “

Disruptions to water supply could cause health problems, especially during the current heatwave, mass migration as resident emigrate in order to find reliable water, and widespread protests as people become more and more concerned that their government isn’t doing enough.

How are the people coping?

In Sistan and Bluchestan province, water is so scarce that more remote regions are having to be served by water tanker and many villages are left uninhabited.

One resident from Delgan, in the south-west of the province, told the state-run media that this is the most pressing issue currently.

The unnamed resident said: “Water disruption lasts four to five days sometimes, which is quite disturbing considering the unprecedented heat wave.”

This is despite the fact the Delgan actually sits atop an area rich in groundwater resources.

The water supply project for Lorestan province has been left unfinished after funding dried up and now 597 villages are without water.

On Tuesday, June 27, residents of Boodjeh Sofla Aslandouz village in Ardebil province and Shahidgah and Gharakord districts in Pishva, Varamin protested the water crises and shut down roads.

The National Council of Resistance of Iran said: “[The] Regime is in crisis in all areas. The environment, for instance, has turned into a huge crisis due to regime’s destructive policies. Excessively digging deep wells and using groundwater resources besides regime’s failing to set up water distribution networks have caused citizens to suffer severe water scarcity.”

06/07/2017 online at:

http://www.iranfocus.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=31749:water-crisis-in-iran-at-critical-level&catid=30&Itemid=122

Violating intl. law on water sharing won’t benefit landlocked countries, Iran says

Hamid Aboutalebi, a political advisor to President Hassan Rouhani, has indirectly called on landlocked Afghanistan that its interests lie in interaction with Iran in sharing water on the basis of international law.

“Interaction among the neighboring countries is based on common interests; ignoring common interests and violating the international law on water is not beneficial for (landlocked) countries,” Aboutalebi tweeted on Saturday.

The Afghan government has announced that it plans to build new dams on Hamun River.

During an opening speech at the International Conference on Combating Sand and Dust Storms in Tehran last Monday, President Rouhani said, "If Hamun's water dries up, in addition to Sistan and Baluchistan, Afghanistan itself will be in danger."

Rouhani said environmental issues are "extra-national and extra-regional challenges".

"We cannot succeed in overcoming environmental challenges without cooperating with neighboring countries," the president remarked.

He also said, "The only way to live peacefully in the West Asia and Middle East region is adopting a win-win policy in the area of environment, helping and standing beside each other."

09/07/2017 online at: <http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/414925/Violating-intl-law-on-water-sharing-won-t-benefit-landlocked>

Afghans protest Rouhani's criticism of dams in country

Afghans took to the streets in the capital Kabul on Sunday to denounce Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's remarks against the construction of dams in the war-torn country.

Organized by the Afghanistan National Cooperation (ANC) party, the rally saw hundreds of protesters chant slogans against Iran and Rouhani.

Earlier this week, the Iranian president said Tehran could not remain indifferent to the construction of dams in Afghanistan.

"Dam construction in Afghanistan and Sistan-Baluchestan province [in Iran] play a role in the desiccation of rivers," Rouhani said at the opening of a three-day international conference on combating sand and dust storms in Tehran, Iran's Financial Tribune daily reported. "People will be forced to leave their homes; civilizations will be destroyed."

Afghan government officials, parliamentarians and civil society activists in various parts of the country have called Rouhani's remarks "interference" in Afghanistan's internal affairs.

Najibullah Kabuli, head of the ANC, told Anadolu Agency that Iran was involved in destabilizing Afghanistan in a bid to gain control of its water resources.

"For years, Iran has been fueling violence in the Afghanistan provinces bordering Iran to hinder development of dams such as Kamal Khan Dam, Salma Dam and reconstruction of Kajaki Dam," he said.

Ten police officers guarding Salma Dam in the western Herat province bordering Iran were killed in a terrorist attack last month. Funded by the Indian government, the project is also known as "Afghan-India Friendship Dam". It was completed last summer.

Afghan President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani told a government meeting on Sunday that water was a major resource for Afghanistan, and the government would develop a legal foundation to better capitalize on this resource.

"We are already investing in dams and irrigation infrastructure to raise agricultural productivity, and as technical designs are completed, we will be accelerating investment in this sector that is key for both growth and poverty reduction," Ghani told the 20th Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board Meeting attended by members of the government and international diplomatic community.

Previously on Friday, Basir Azimi, spokesman for the Ministry of Energy and Water said the government was planning to build 20 more large and medium-sized dams in the country.

Meanwhile, Iranian Ambassador Mohammad Reza Bahrami said his country respected Afghanistan's national interests and added that Rouhani's remarks were misunderstood by Afghans.

"No doubt, Rouhani did not mean what has been perceived from his remarks. He was talking about regional challenges, about a regional crisis," Bahrami was quoted as saying in an interview published by local TOLONews on Friday.

Afghan officials accuse Iran -- the only country that Afghanistan has a water treaty with -- of taking up to 70 percent more water than agreed upon in 1973, and of building infrastructure on the incoming water without Afghanistan's consent.

The Afghan-Iran Water treaty was signed between former Afghan and Iranian prime ministers, Musa Shafiq and Amir Abas Huwaida.

09/07/2017 online at: <http://aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/afghans-protest-rouhanis-criticism-of-dams-in-country/857693>

Israeli technology to help solve India's water shortage

An Israeli company that affordably extracts water from thin air signed a memorandum of understanding to bring its proprietary technology to India.

Rishon Lezion based Water-Gen and India's SUN Group announced their collaboration in Tel Aviv on Tuesday, agreeing that the latter will be responsible for distributing the former's technology in the Indian market. The partners are focusing on providing a potable water solution to the Indian military, official institutions and government agencies in particular, according to the memorandum.

The partnership announcement coincided with the arrival to Israel of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his accompanying business delegation – among whose members is the vice chairman of the SUN Group, Shiv Vikram Khemka. The signing took place at an event held by the Manufacturers Association of Israel.

“We are a business company, but our vision is a humanitarian one,” said Water-Gen executive chairman Maxim Pasik. “In the 21st century, there is no reason for any society to suffer shortage of water.”

The agreement with the SUN Group is one of many recent such collaborations cemented by Water-Gen around the world. Most recently, the Miami suburb of Miami Gardens announced that it would launch a pilot program using the company’s system.

Water-Gen’s technology first made waves at the AIPAC Policy conference in Washington at the end of March, when Prof. Alan Dershowitz presented the company’s device on stage and pulled water out of the air. Trapping humid air on-demand, the device cleans and dries the air and extracts clean water.

The company claims to offer a far more affordable option than other systems that have tried to extract water from air, as the heat exchanger in the device is made from plastic rather than from aluminum. Generating 1 gallon (3.79 liters) of water requires only 1 kW of energy, according to the firm.

Water-Gen’s system is available in three sizes: a small home appliance, a medium-scale model and an industrial water generator with a capacity of up to 6,000 liters of water per day.

The company stressed the importance of bringing its solution to India, which is the second-most populous country in the world and suffers from a chronic water shortage. In rural areas, where 74% of the population resides, only about 21% of the people have access to good sanitation and only 84% benefit from a regular water supply, the firm said. In urban areas, where the situation is better, just 54% of residents have access to good sanitation and 96% enjoy a regular water supply, the company said.

Globally, more than a million children under the age of five die every year from diseases related to water shortages or water contamination, added Pasik.

“In this sense, the technology Water-Gen has developed is a humanitarian one, and we see it as a moral obligation to distribute it as much as possible where it is needed,” he said. “It is no secret that there is a need for technology like Water-Gen’s in India, and this is why we are so happy about the memorandum of understanding signed yesterday between us and an Indian company sharing this vision.”

05/07/2017 online at: <http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Israeli-water-technology-firm-inks-deal-with-India-498818>

Jordan water ministry says it lacks funding despite promised aid

The Ministry of Water and Irrigation only secured 19 per cent of funds required to sustain water and wastewater services to Syrian refugees and local communities hosting them this year, a senior government official said on Sunday.

A total of \$220 million has been allocated for this year's water and wastewater projects, under the 2015-2017 Jordan Response Plan for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Minister of Water and Irrigation Hazem Nasser said.

"... However, until today, the ministry has only received 44 million dollars of the allocated funds for this year. This is affecting the level of services provided to host communities, as well as to Syrian refugees," Nasser told reporters during a press meeting.

In 2016, a total of \$275 million were allocated to the ministry under the plan, dubbed by ministry officials as "a resilience plan for the water sector".

Nasser said that, while the international community has other priorities due to events in Yemen and Libya, among other countries in the region, it must not "turn its back on Jordan".

The ministry launched its \$750 million water, sanitation and hygiene response plan for Syrian refugees and host communities in 2015, with the aim of enhancing the capacity of the government and host communities to meet the increased demand for water and sanitation services.

Jordan is hosting 1.4 million Syrians, of whom some 650,000 are refugees and 85 per cent live among host communities, according to the response plan.

It indicated that the addition of hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees to an "already-vulnerable" water, sanitation and hygiene situation has resulted in "severe pressure" on the entire system of these services in Jordan.

Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis in 2011, demand for water has increased by 40 per cent, while supply remains scarce, according to the ministry.

10/07/2017 online at:

https://www.zawya.com/mena/en/story/Jordan_water_ministry_says_it_lacks_funding_despite_promised_aid-ZAWYA20170710053423/

Project signed to increase water supply in Saudi Arabia

Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture Abdulrahman Al-Fadhli awarded a project to build 17 strategic water reservoirs in Makkah's Al-Sharay and Taif's Al-Hada areas, each with a capacity of 170,000 cubic meters, totaling 2.9 million cubic meters of potable water, reported Al-Hayat newspaper.

The water reservoir projects will be completed in three years, according to the contracts.

A similar project in Jeddah reached 97 percent completion of its first stage in January. Fawwaz Bahlas of the National Water Co. (NWC) said the company started executing the Jeddah project in 2012 for the water storage in the city to reach 4 million cubic meters. In the Eastern Province, the Water Service Administration announced the allocation of SR69 million (\$18.4 million) for the region's water-storage projects.

Water Ministry to implement new project plans

In a move to ensure an adequate water supply across the Kingdom, the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture has mapped out new plans to ensure effective implementation and sustainability of a number of new and existing water projects.

The ministry will also rescind projects from defaulters, and issue warnings to contractors who have delayed projects without any legitimate reason.

“The ministry will take new measures for project execution and appoint young officials to achieve the goals of Vision 2030,” said a statement released by the ministry on Sunday. Some of the new measures include holding regular meetings with contractors, identifying reasons behind disruptions or delay of projects, and appointing good consultancy firms.

The Kingdom has launched 116 water supply and sanitation projects at a cumulative value of SR4.9 billion, which will establish plants for water purification and pumping, expand and develop treatment plants; and establish a number of water reservoirs. Another major initiative is to reuse wastewater across the country.

“Another initiative of the ministry is to promote awareness about conservation because water scarcity is one of the most significant challenges in Saudi Arabia and the wider Middle East region,” said Mohammed Al-Solaiman, a water expert.

“To achieve this, billions of dollars of long-term capital investments have been committed to water projects, while government agencies are working to educate people to reduce water consumption,” he added.

10/07/2017 online at:

[https://www.zawya.com/mena/en/story/Project signed to increase water supply in Saudi Arabia-ZAWYA20170710045725/](https://www.zawya.com/mena/en/story/Project%20signed%20to%20increase%20water%20supply%20in%20Saudi%20Arabia-ZAWYA20170710045725/)

Water for farming: Qatar’s achievements reviewed at FAO event

HE the Minister of Municipality and Environment, Mohamed bin Abdullah al-Rumaihi, has reviewed the experience and achievements of Qatar on water use in agriculture along with the ways and areas of use of treated wastewater in animal feeds during a ministerial event on 'Addressing Water Scarcity and improving food Security Under Climate Change - Perspectives from the Near East and North Africa Region.'

HE al-Rumaihi took part in this event on the sidelines of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Conference 40th Session.

The event included a Ministerial-level discussion on the challenges of climate change, water scarcity and its implications for agriculture, food security and nutrition in the Arab region.

Qatar is participating in the conference with a delegation headed by the Minister of Municipality and the Environment, who will discuss a number of issues related to agriculture, food security, water and other related topics.

05/07/2017 online at: <http://www.gulf-times.com/story/555620/Water-for-farming-Qatar-s-achievements-reviewed-at>

Minister highlights Kuwait's efforts to tackle water scarcity

Kuwait on Tuesday gave a presentation about its successful efforts in dealing with water security, affirming strong backing to UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) initiative to crystallize a joint regional strategy towards challenges of water scarcity.

The State of Kuwait has only one resource of water, groundwater, while most of the country's water needs are met by desalination, he added. He stated that population growth and a rise in standards of living led to an unprecedented rise in water consumption, despite the country's efforts made over long decades in tackling water scarcity.

As a result, the country had to depend on wastewater treatment as an additional source for agricultural purposes, and to reduce pressures on indispensable groundwater, he told the conference. This way has contributed to achieving sustainable water security in the country, he pointed out.

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Kuwait is taking part in the conference to share expertise and views, and supporting the initiative launched by FAO in 2013 in collaboration with the Arab League in the Near East and North Africa region, he stressed.

Major Gap

Meanwhile, Arab League Secretary General Ahmad Abul Gheit said the future of the Arab region is tightly linked to the problem of water scarcity, referring to a major gap between supply and demand in water and food in the Arab region. He said this gap leads to dire political, economic and security consequences. Abul Gheit told reporters that climate changes, water and agriculture dossiers are main reasons for instability of the region, and will lead to negative impacts on the future of the regional countries. He reiterated the importance of mobilizing international efforts to tackle challenges to water and food security in the Arab region.

In the meantime, FAO Director-General Jose Graziano da Silva said the Arab countries should continue to seek innovations to overcome the water scarcity crisis in the face of climate change. He lauded accomplishments made by the region's countries, mainly the Gulf ones, in desalination, water harvesting, drip irrigation and treating wastewater. "It is fundamental to promote ways for agriculture, and food production in general, to use less water, and use it more efficiently," he said.

“Population growth and the impacts of climate change will put more pressure on water availability in the near future. Climate change, in particular, poses very serious risks.” He pointed out that farmers and rural households should be at the center of strategies to tackle water scarcity.

He said not only to encourage them to adopt more efficient farming technologies, but also to secure access to drinking water for poor rural households. This is vital for food security and improved nutrition, he made clear. In the Near East and North Africa region, the per capita renewable water availability is around 600 cubic meters per person per year – only 10 percent of the world average – and drops to just 100 cubic meters in some countries. The FAO conference, which includes over 600 high-level government officials and representatives from 194 countries, will run until July 8. It mainly focuses on issues and policies related to global food security.

05/07/2017 online at: <http://news.kuwaittimes.net/website/minister-highlights-kuwaits-efforts-tackle-water-scarcity/>

UN Migration Agency Rehabilitates Water Wells in Southern Libya

The UN Migration Agency (IOM) has completed the rehabilitation of 18 water wells in 12 out of 14 neighbourhoods of the Libyan city of Sabha. Those neighborhoods are: Manshiya, Mashroo’, Hajara, Aljadeed, Almahdiya, Abdelkafi, Althanawiya, Sukara, Gurda, Tyori, Nasriya, and Junga.

The project, part of the IOM Community Stabilization programme “Together We Rebuild”, included the provision of new electrical pumps for wells to allow the restoration of a domestic water supply.

The rehabilitation was accomplished with funding from the European Union. The UN Migration Agency contracted two local enterprises from Sabha. Activity was closely coordinated and supported by local authorities, in particular the Water and Waste Company in Sabha, the owner of the water wells.

The implementation of this project comes at a critical time when the city of Sabha has been suffering from an ongoing water crisis, which is particularly critical during the summer season when water consumption increases.

“We highly appreciate the support of the EU and the efforts made by IOM in rehabilitating 18 water wells in Sabha city which has been suffering from serious water shortages. This support comes at a critical time when the Water and Waste Water Company is in need of such support to help us maintain this essential service to the people of the city,” explained engineer Mohammad Aboul-Qassem Yaqa, the Head of Works and Maintenance Department at the Water and Waste Water Company.

Libya’s Minister of Local Government, Badad Ganaso Abdul Jaleel, added: "The Ministry of Local Government of the Government of National Accord supports IOM initiatives to promote community stabilization in the south of Libya. We are confident that the people of

Sabha and the south in general urgently need these important projects, especially in these difficult times."

The identification of the necessity for the rehabilitation of water wells came as the result of a series of community meetings conducted by the Community Management Committee (CMC), which was formed by IOM and includes influential representatives from various tribes and social figures of the city. The CMC met with the community members in the various neighbourhoods, all of whom identified the rehabilitation of the water wells as their communities' top priority.

The EU Ambassador for Libya, Bettina Muscheidt, explained that the EU supports Libyan efforts to end the current crisis through a political solution. "In the meantime," she said, "Libya's people cannot wait. Families across the country are in dire need of services. They want a return to normality. This is where this partnership between the Water and Waste Company in Sabha, the IOM and the EU can make a difference to improve lives and alleviate the suffering in an area where many different communities have been affected by the conflict."

"The EU will continue supporting, through similar local initiatives, the economic and political stabilization of the south of the country," added Ambassador Muscheidt.

"IOM thanks the Ministry of Local Government, the EU, the local municipality and the CMC for their continuous support as this project will facilitate access to water for thousands of people. We will continue to address the most urgent needs identified by the communities," concluded IOM Libya Chief of Mission Othman Belbeisi.

07/07/2017 online at: <http://reliefweb.int/report/libya/un-migration-agency-rehabilitates-water-wells-southern-libya>

MoEW Says It Plans To Build At Least 20 More Dams

The Ministry of Energy and Water (MoEW) on Saturday said it is working hard to implement plans to build 20 large and medium-sized dams in the country.

According to them, at least 15 dams are currently under construction and 15 other dam projects are being worked on. Construction on these will be implemented once the National Procurement Authority (NPA) approves the project budgets.

According to MoEW, they are also preparing to start working on the Kafkan, Tirpol and Pashdan dam projects in Herat, along the Harirod River. Once all these dams have been completed, water in the east and southern zones of the country will be managed.

"We continue our efforts to build the dams based on our plans. We have done a lot in this field and a lot has remained to be done," the MoEW spokesman Basir Azimi said.

Last year, the Salma Dam was completed in Herat – which was one of the government's key dam projects.

In addition to this, the second phase of Kajaki dam in Helmand, the last phase of Kamal Khan dam in Nimroz and Bakhshabad Dam in Farah are under construction.

A number of MPs meanwhile said the energy and water ministry do not take steps to control water management issues.

This comes after Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on Tuesday at a conference in Tehran slammed the Afghan government for building the dams.

“An agreement has been signed by Afghanistan and Iran on Helmand River when Musa Shafiq was the minister of foreign affairs. Therefore, no issue has remained on water between the two countries,” said Abdul Raouf Ibrahimy, the Wolesi Jirga (Lower House of Parliament) speaker.

A number of economists said however said the National Unity Government has failed to start big dam projects, except to complete and implement projects that were started during the former administration.

“The value of water will increase day-by-day. Currently we use only a small portion of our waters and most of it flows to neighboring countries. They (neighboring countries) have built dams on our waters,” economic affairs analyst Azrakhsh Hafizi said.

On average, the water volume in Afghanistan is estimated to up to 70 billion cubic meters annually. But 80 percent of these waters are flowing to Iran, Pakistan and other neighboring nations in Central Asian countries.

08/07/2017 online at: <http://www.tolonews.com/node/52321>

Pakistan urges India to share timely information on water outflows from its rivers

Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lt. General Omar Mahmood Hayat has urged India to share timely information on water outflows from its rivers and actual rainfall recorded as stipulated in Indus Water Treaty.

He was chairing an inter-agencies meeting for floods mitigation in Islamabad on Wednesday.

The Chairman said it is obligation of India as upper riparian.

He asked Pakistan Commission for Indus Water to enhance coordination mechanism of early warning arrangements for release of water, especially from Eastern Rivers.

He said NDMA was taking necessary measures to enhance national resilience against disasters and to ensure the safety of human lives, properties and developmental infrastructure.

05/07/2017 online at: <http://www.radio.gov.pk/05-Jul-2017/chairman-ndma-urges-india-to-share-timely-information-on-water-outflows-from-its-rivers>

New building for US-Pakistan Center for Advanced Studies in Water inaugurated

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission Director Jerry Bisson and Deputy Mission Director Denise Herbol on Thursday inaugurated a new building and research center at Mehran University of Engineering & Technology (MUET), Jamshoro.

The facility was constructed with the support of the U.S. government under the U.S.-Pakistan Center for Advanced Studies in Water (USPCAS-W) project.

Highlighting the United States' long-term commitment to strengthen Pakistan's education sector and help find practical solutions for the country's water challenges, Deputy Mission Director Denise Herbol said, "The work you all do here will have important implications for growth in Sindh and Pakistan."

Education Minister Jam Mehtab Hussain Dahar expressed his appreciation for USAID support and thanked the United States for assisting in many projects in the province, including basic education and health.

Vice Chancellor of MUET, Dr. Muhammad Aslam Uqaili and Former Vice Chancellor MUET Prof. S. M. Qureshi were also present on the occasion.

The new three-story state-of-the-art building has a covered area of 54,721 square feet with an additional 108,600 square feet of open area for landscaping and future expansion. The facilities include five classrooms, six research labs, a library, a lecture theater/auditorium, a conference room, student common rooms, research scholars' room and administration offices.

Through USAID, the U.S. government has provided \$20 million for the construction of four new research centers at Pakistani universities.

This initiative is part of USAID's larger \$127 million U.S.-Pakistan Centers for Advanced Studies program that is harnessing applied research to find innovative solutions for Pakistan's water, energy, agriculture, and food security challenges.

06/07/2017 online at: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/214817-New-building-for-US-Pakistan-Center-for-Advanced-Studies-in-Water-inaugurated>

Indus Water Treaty: Pakistan urges World Bank to fulfil its commitment

Pakistan on Saturday urged the World Bank to fulfil its commitment in regards to the Indus Water Treaty (IWT), reported Radio Pakistan.

The demand was made by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar in a letter to the President of the World Bank Group Jim Yong Kim.

Dar said in his letter that World Bank's earlier decision will seriously prejudice Pakistan's interests and rights under the terms of the Indus Water Treaty of 1960.

The finance minister said the 'pause' proposed by the World Bank will prevent Pakistan from approaching another competent forum to have its grievances addressed.

Dar, in his letter, said the IWT does not allow a party to pause its performance due to the obligations present in the treaty.

The letter also conveyed that the matter of appointment of a chairman for the Court of Arbitration has been delayed, and urged the institution to execute its obligations under the IWT.

Earlier this week, the World Bank on Monday announced a pause in arbitration between Islamabad and New Delhi on the matter of the two dams being constructed by India, calling on both countries “to consider alternative ways to resolve their disagreements”.

In the aftermath of rising cross-border tensions following the Uri army base attack and an alleged Indian ‘surgical strike’, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in November threatened to stop honouring the Indus Waters Treaty and block the flow of water into Pakistan.

India is constructing two hydropower projects on the Chenab River. Pakistan has objected to the construction of the 850MegaWatt Ratle and 330MW Kishanganga hydropower schemes, saying that both projects would have adverse impact on the flow of the Chenab and Neelum rivers.

Both countries had initiated separate processes in the World Bank under the IWT, with India requesting the body for appointment of a ‘Neutral Expert’, and Pakistan calling for the appointment of the chairman of the Court of Arbitration.

The World Bank explained the pause saying: “Both processes initiated by the respective countries were advancing at the same time, creating a risk of contradictory outcomes that could potentially endanger the Treaty.”

World Bank President Jim Yong Kim said Pakistan and India should look to resolve the conflict mutually and within the bounds of the IWT.

WB urges India and Pakistan to agree to mediation

In November, the World Bank urged India and Pakistan to agree to mediation in order to settle on a mechanism for how the IWT should be used to resolve issues regarding the construction of the two dams along the Indus river system.

The IWT is seen as one of the most successful international treaties and has withstood frequent tensions between India and Pakistan, including conflicts. The bank is a signatory to the treaty.

The treaty sets out a mechanism for cooperation and information exchange between the two countries regarding their use of the rivers, known as the Permanent Indus Commission which includes a commissioner from each of the two countries.

It also sets out a process for resolving so-called “questions”, “differences” and “disputes” that may arise between the parties.

09/07/2017 online at: <http://www.pakistankakhudahafiz.com/indus-water-treaty-pakistan-urges-world-bank-fulfil-commitment/>