

Complaint ABC Radio National – Saturday Extra - Jan 26 & Feb 2, 2019

Israeli experts on drought management

Water situation in Palestine reaches crisis point

To: ABC Complaints

CC: ABC Board

Presenter Sat Extra: Geraldine Doogue

Producer Sat Extra: Taryn Priadko

26 Feb, 2019

We the undersigned make the following complaint about the Saturday Extra programs which were broadcast on ABC Radio National on January 26 and February 2, 2019.

These two programmes on water management and water scarcity and quality in Israel-Palestine failed to present the key historical and political framework and issues which are fundamental to any discussion of this subject. We contend that these omissions led to biased and factually incorrect information being presented and breaches of the ABC editorial guidelines in relation to accuracy and impartiality.

1) The program, *'Israeli experts on drought management'* of 26 Jan, 2019, failed to mention the longstanding and ongoing water conflict between Israel and its near neighbours, especially Palestine. The Israeli experts and the interviewer did not refer to the location of the key aquifers which are on trans-national territories nor did they mention the contentious Israeli history of extracting large amounts of water from the Jordan River to illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank whilst denying equal water to Palestinians.

The omission of these highly documented facts breaches the ABC editorial guidelines in relation to accuracy and impartiality. Additionally, this program implied that the speakers were part of a government initiative between Australia and Israel whereas there is no evidence of this claim but rather only evidence that the 'initiative' was driven and supported by the Israeli Embassy in Australia and the Jewish National Fund Australia and a businessman associated with the Israeli lobby in Australia. This inference breaches the ABC editorial guidelines in relation to accuracy and impartiality.

2) The program, *'Water situation in Palestine reaches crisis point'* of 2 Feb, 2019, failed to present a Palestinian voice or any water experts who could have given a clear summary of the key issues in relation to the documented Israeli water theft and control of water infrastructure in the West Bank and the destruction of water infrastructure and ongoing blockade of materials to rebuild the same in Gaza. Furthermore it featured a speaker linked to an organisation which is publicly pro-Israel. We contend that this program also breached the ABC's editorial guidelines in relation to accuracy and impartiality.

Section 1 Regarding the first program - *Israel Experts on Drought Management*

a) The speakers from the Ben Gurion University of the Negev were introduced by the presenter Geraldine Doogue, as participants in a 'major' initiative between 'the Australian government, the NSW and Qld state governments and the Israeli embassy and the Jewish National fund' whereby Israel's "experience of dealing with water shortages would be shared with the two drought affected states.." Apparently they were in Australia for a 10 day visit as part of this initiative.

However, according to the Australian Financial Review (Jan 21, 2019) and other sources, this visit was 'organised by leading businessman and ANZ chairman David Gonski and the Jewish National Fund of Australia' and that the 'delegation' met with experts, government officials and businesses, as part of

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efforts to promote cooperation between the two countries.’ The visit was ‘coordinated by the Embassy of Israel in Canberra and representatives of the NSW and Queensland state governments’.¹

It appears from these statements that:

- The visit was in fact a ‘delegation’ which was organised and supported by an individual businessman who in the past has led a trade delegation to Israel.
- The delegation was also supported by the Jewish National Fund in Australia which is an overtly pro Israel organisation whose parent body, the Jewish National Fund has been actively dispossessing Palestinians from their lands since 1948².
- The ‘initiative’ was nothing more than a PR tour organised by the Israeli Embassy in Australia along with a businessman and a pro Israeli advocacy organisation. There is no evidence that this ‘initiative’ was sponsored, funded or planned by any Australian government body and we call on the ABC to prove otherwise.
- Representatives from NSW and Queensland state governments routinely meet with delegations from overseas. There is no evidence to suggest that the visit of this delegation was approved or funded by either state government. Individual MPs are free to meet with whoever they choose to but conflating this with an official initiative is misleading.

The ABC program Saturday Extra wrongfully gave the impression that this was a government to government organised ‘initiative’ whereby Israeli ‘water experts’ were being brought to Australia to offer their expertise on Australia’s drought. This inference was misleading and incorrect.

b) The interviewees outlined how ‘water is central to national security in Israel’ and how the first large scale water project in the early 60s, the Israeli Water Carrier running from the Sea of Galilee in the north to the Negev desert in the south, connected to ground water from different aquifers and emphasised the importance of these aquifers.

However the way in which Israel has appropriated water from key aquifers which are trans-boundary water resources (because of their location outside of the internationally accepted boundaries of the state of Israel), particularly since its 1967 military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in Palestine, was not mentioned.

As can be seen from numerous academic studies the issue of water theft (see Appendix 1), water diversion and land appropriation is key to the Israeli water story and its omission is misleading.

“After the creation of Israel in 1948, further plans to divert water resources were put into action, in particular, the National Water Carrier, and its supporting water pump stations network, which is considered to be the backbone of Israel’s water sector.

The carrier was completed in 1964, diverting the waters of the Jordan River, the only surface water resource available for Palestinians, and much of the groundwater, through the supporting pumping stations, to the middle and south of Israel. This had a tremendous impact on the quantity and quality of Palestinian water resources. Later in 1967, the era of water domination started with the Israeli occupation of the rest of Palestine, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

¹ <https://www.afr.com/news/politics/drought-in-focus-for-new-australiaisrael-cooperation-on-water-management-20190120-h1a9kc>

² <https://ijvcanada.org/2013/expose-the-jewish-national-fund-jnf/>

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Israel imposed its de facto control over the water resources of the OPT, which include: the Mountain Aquifer, the Coastal Aquifer and the Jordan River, and introduced a new military legal regime which changed the pre-existing laws and institutions.

The new water regime imposed by Israel has effectively altered water rights, ownership and institutions in the OPT. Water became public property under the control of an Israeli Officer, pre-existing water laws were largely cancelled and modified, water institutions were subjugated to Israeli institutions and downgraded to lower-level management.³

As can be seen from this recent academic study and also from the extensive work by the internationally recognised German water hydrologist, Clemens Messerschmid⁴, Israel has maintained an ongoing and relentless regime of water theft and water restriction on the whole Palestinian population in order to maintain its water superiority.

When Israel occupied the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Golan Heights in 1967, all the headwaters of the Jordan River, in addition to West Bank groundwater, came under its control.⁵

In 1982, the Israeli military transferred its control of the West Bank's water resources to Mekorot, Israel's water company founded in 1937.

Mekorot has been criticized in lengthy reports in 2009 from the World Bank and Amnesty International as well as in two critical reports from the UN's Country Team in the Occupied Palestinian Territories in 2012 and 2017 and by a report for the European Parliament in 2016. Shocking evidence is also coming from NGOs such as B'tselem, the Alliance for Water Justice in Palestine, LifeGate, the Applied Research Institute in Jerusalem, EcoWash and Friends of the Earth Middle East (an organisation of Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian environmentalists).⁶ The fact of water theft and unjust treatment of Palestinians is beyond contention, even if framed in moderate terms by some analysts. (See further detail in Appendix 1).

Israel's national water company Mekorot is under threat due to the impact of this mounting evidence. Mekorot had won contracts in several countries, but is now faced with campaigns to boycott its business for violating international law concerning Palestinian rights (see Appendix 1). From 2013 the European Union mandated a denial of funding to Israeli institutions operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and the UK's Trade and Investment Agency discourages British firms from conducting business with companies associated with unlawful Israeli settlements.⁷ The Netherlands has recently terminated a contract with Mekorot and Argentina has cancelled a project because trade unions and human rights groups link Mekorot to the ongoing theft of Palestinian water.

³ <http://unsworks.unsw.edu.au/fapi/datastream/unsworks:47906/SOURCE02?view=true>

⁴ <https://www.juragentium.org/topics/palestin/en/water.pdf>

⁵ <https://al-shabaka.org/briefs/apolitical-approach-palestines-water-crisis/>

⁶ World Bank Report No. 47657-GZ, *Assessment of Restrictions on Palestinian Water Sector Development*, April 2009; Amnesty International, *Troubled Waters- Palestinians Denied Fair Access to Water*, AI Publications 2009; Briefing for the European Parliament, *Water in the Palestine-Israel Conflict*, January 2016; UN Country Team in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, *Gaza in 2020: A Liveable Place?* August 2012, and *Gaza: Ten Years Later*, July 2017. The UN established its 'country office' and a Special Rapporteur in the Occupied Territories to support international efforts to respond to the "humanitarian situation" in the West Bank and Gaza

⁷ A. Sterman, "Dutch Water Giant Nixes Prjects," *Times of Israel*, 10.12. 2013

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The inference from the interviewees that they would welcome ongoing discussions on how Israeli water technology would benefit Australia was of concern given the interviewer's ignorance concerning the grave violations of human rights which this national water company has been accused of. Ms Doogue's gushing enthusiasm and endorsement of Israel as a 'world leader' in water management as presented by the two Israeli water experts, was biased and uninformed.

Section 2 Regarding the 2nd program, '*Water Situation in Palestine Reaches Crisis Point*' was introduced by Ms Doogue as a response to the criticism the program Saturday Extra had received from the previous program on Israeli water expertise due to its omission of any discussion of the water crisis in Palestine.

It was a shallow, perfunctory 10 minute interview which attempted to balance the discussion of Israeli water superiority in the previous program but again breached the ABC's editorial guidelines by

- omitting key facts about why there was a Palestinian water crisis and
- choosing not to interview a Palestinian expert on the situation but rather to interview a spokesperson from a US think tank who has extensive links to Israel and has served in the Israeli Defense Forces.

The choice of the interviewee for this topic was Shira Efron, special adviser on Israel and policy researcher at RAND's Centre for Middle East Public Policy. This Centre is funded by the RAND Corporation, which in turn is funded by the US government, corporations and individuals. RAND's Australian Advisory Board includes Richard Smith from the Lowy Institute, whose journal called for closer links between Israel and Australia, complaining recently of "*lack-lustre diplomacy*" in the face of the ALP's move to recognise Palestinian sovereignty due to "*strident*" left factions.⁸

Ms Efron is closely associated with Israel and with pro Israeli commentary. She was the policy director and country representative of the Institute for Inclusive Security in Israel. She was an editor on the Israeli newspaper, Haaretz and was a reporter in the Israeli Defense Forces.

The fact this commentator was chosen by the ABC to discuss the water crisis in Palestine is appalling and shows extraordinary bias. The lack of a Palestinian speaker on this topic breaches the ABC editorial guidelines by not providing balance and by a lack of impartiality. It also shows an appalling level of contempt for Palestinians and their assessment of the situation and an alarming political bias in favour of the US and Israel.

Ms Efron gave a quick overview of how Israel controls the water resources in the West Bank and Gaza due to the 1967 war and the Oslo Accords. There was discussion of water restrictions in the Occupied West Bank and the point was made that the settlements were able to access more water than the Palestinians as they were linked into the same supplies of water as those that go to Israel whereas the Palestinians have to save water on their roofs. There was no comment from either the interviewer or interviewee that this was in fact an illegal situation according to international law.

In response to the question from Ms Doogue, 'Has water become a weapon?' Ms Shira Efron stated that this was not the case despite the fact that multiple international bodies including the UN have unambiguously stated the opposite (see Appendix 2 on UN resolutions).

⁸ *The Interpreter*, Lowy Institute Journal, 21.2.2017

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We submit that this interviewee was biased in that she did not offer any real explanation of the way Israel controls and limits Palestinians' access to water especially in the Jordan valley where the dispossession and water theft has led to ongoing economic deprivation. Ms Efron rather evaded the question and spoke of an 'opportunity' rather than a 'crisis' and offered the opinion that the water issues in Palestine could be solved without needing first to solve the political situation.

Many resolutions by United Nations bodies, including the Security Council and General Assembly, have condemned Israel's water policies in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and called upon Israel to desist from the exploitation of Palestinian water resources, and affirmed that Israel is in breach of the rules of international law, in particular, international humanitarian law.⁹ See also Appendix 2.

Ms Efron spoke of Israel as a 'global water superhero' which is an opinion based on a denial of the long history of water theft and the international community's recognition of this fact.

She spoke of how Israel is now selling water to Jordan and that it could sell it to Palestine (as the international donors could pay for it). This was an astounding comment given that the asymmetry of the access to water between Israel and Palestine is well documented and non contentious. Palestinians are already forced to buy water which is rightly theirs from the Israeli water company at exorbitant prices. See comments above on the first program and also Appendix 1 and 2 for more detailed information on this.

The highly regarded Palestinian human rights organisation, Al Haq published a report in 2013, 'Water For One People Only: Discriminatory Access and 'Water-Apartheid' in the Occupied Palestinian Territory'¹⁰ that showed that

Israel's policies and practices in relation to water in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) amount to a system of 'water-apartheid.' The threshold for apartheid is met because the inhuman acts, committed against Palestinians through the denial of access to water in the OPT, are carried out systematically in the context of an institutionalised regime with the intent of establishing and maintaining Jewish-Israeli domination over Palestinians as a group.

When discussing the water crisis in Gaza, Ms Efron explained how dire the situation was and mentioned how much untreated sewerage from Gaza flows into the Mediterranean Sea each day. She also spoke of electricity interruptions and of the fact that Gaza is facing a crisis and Gazans are drinking impure water.

Ms Efron said Israel has the technical solutions to this water crisis but she did not mention that Israel was the cause of the breakdown of the water infrastructure in Gaza or that the electricity interruptions were the result of Israel's actions over more than a decade.

The fact that the interviewer and interviewee did not choose to mention the destruction of water and electricity infrastructure as a result of the three massive recent Israeli attacks on Gaza - Cast Lead (2008-2009), Pillar of Defence (2012) and Operation Protective Edge (2014), showed unacceptable bias as did the omission of any mention of the Israeli blockade of Gaza which is now in its 12th year¹¹ which has made reconstruction of this infrastructure virtually impossible.

⁹ <http://unsworks.unsw.edu.au/fapi/datastream/unsworks:47906/SOURCE02?view=true>

¹⁰ <http://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/topics/housing-land-and-natural-resources/695-water-for-one-people-only-discriminatory-access-and-water-apartheid-in-the-occupied-palestinian-territory>

¹¹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/theme/gaza-blockade>

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The infrastructural damage of the previous war has yet to be repaired – and now it has been set back further, following the destruction of Gaza’s sole power plant. Serving 1.8m people, the plant was struck during a seven-hour bombardment in which 128 Palestinians died, bringing the number of fatalities to more than 1,200 Palestinians and 53 Israeli soldiers.¹²

In summary, Shira Efron and the two water experts briefly alluded to what they saw as the apparently insuperable obstacles posed to water reform by “politics.” They were not questioned about key reasons for the Israeli water success or the Palestinian water crisis including the ongoing unlawful occupation of Palestinian land and water resources, the Israeli attacks on Gaza’s infrastructure and the ongoing Gaza blockade as well as the rapidly expanding illegal settlements and their excessive water consumption.

These two programs exhibited bias and lacked crucial information which should have been provided to balance the opinions presented. Saturday Extra claims to ‘cover international politics, global affairs, business, travel and arts and culture via the prism of Australia’s role in the Asia Pacific region and beyond’ including ‘developments on the world stage and the ways in which they matter to Australians.’ Given this brief, it is to be expected that a current affairs style of program such as this would be required to present balanced and well researched content.

We contend that neither of these programs presented balanced or well researched content and that they lacked impartiality and accuracy.

We ask that the ABC provide balanced reporting on Palestine and Palestinian matters and seeks to rectify the bias shown in these two programs by broadcasting and publishing content on the Israel Palestine water issue by Palestinian speakers and internationally recognized water experts on the situation in Palestine who are not aligned with Israel.

We also ask that the ABC clarifies and explains via the Saturday Extra website and on air, the nature and funding of the water ‘initiative’ which was presented as an Australian government initiative but seems to have been organised and funded by the Israeli Embassy, the Jewish National Fund and Mr David Gonski.

Appendix 1

A Brief History of Water Theft

Before the State of Israel was declared, control over the two major rivers, Jordan and Auja, was handed by the British government to a Zionist consortium in the 1920s, backed by Rothschild funds. This so-called Rutenberg Concession (now the Israeli Electric Company) was a water monopoly formed to supply hydroelectric power to new Jewish towns and factories, plus water for irrigation of Jewish farms. Palestinians had to apply to the Rutenberg Company, mostly without success, if they wanted access to their water for irrigation or for hydroelectric power production. The situation was described by British journalist J.M.N. Jeffries: “... the revised charter of the Rutenberg Company reserves the water of the Jordan for that company’s industrial use, no peasant or proprietor being permitted from the date of its signature to divert this water on to his own land for irrigation or for any other purpose if he thereby reduces the quantity of water below the quantity required by the Company for its electrical works ... As for the smaller Auja, the Rutenberg Company holds the Auja concession too.” J.M.N. Jeffries, *Palestine: the Reality*, Olive Branch Press, USA, 2017 (1st edition 1939), p. 741. Waters of the

¹² <http://theconversation.com/water-in-the-firing-line-as-israel-targets-gazas-infrastructure-29867>

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Jordan were diverted to central and coastal Jewish towns, and the headwaters of the Auja/Yarkon have been diverted to irrigate the Negev. The pollution of the Jordan River was described above, and the state of the Auja/Yarkon River is similar. Numerous failed efforts to purify the Yarkon River are listed in a recent article by Eran Elder, *The Yarkon is Always Green*, Israel Affairs, Vol. 24, Issue 5, 2018.

Israel's victory in the 1967 war consolidated near total control over water supplies and allocation in the Occupied West Bank and its Mountain Aquifer as well as in Israel. The Israeli water company Mekorot has been integrating West Bank villages, and to a lesser extent Gazan inhabitants, into the Israeli water network, and charging them for the supply.

Palestinians are not permitted to access their own water by drilling deeper wells, though the water table has sunk due to Israeli wells and extraction, or to repair leaking and aging water pipes. Any work to repair or improve wells, cisterns or pipe systems is likely to be physically destroyed by the Israeli military, which rules over Area C, 60% of the West Bank, and also operates elsewhere.

A new phase was reached in 1995 in the water agreement between Israel and Palestine, known as Oslo 11. In agreeing to an 80% (for Israel) against 20% (for Palestinians) water sharing arrangement the Palestinians were totally out-manouvered. However the agreement was meant to be merely an interim one, awaiting "final status" negotiations over the three most difficult issues of refugees, water and Jerusalem, supposed to be concluded by 1999. Twenty-three years later the agreement is still extant with no end in sight. The quantities are capped but the Palestinian population has doubled since 1995. Mekorot pipes some water to Gaza and Israel indicated recently that it would increase the amount; the catch is that the Gazans have to pay and they cannot afford it.

"Since it occupied the West Bank in 1967, Israel has laid hands on Palestinian water resources through discriminatory water-sharing agreements that prevented Palestinians from maintaining or developing their water infrastructure through its illegal planning and permit regime. As a result, thousands of Palestinians are unable to access sufficient water supplies and became water-dependent on Israel.

By building on the myth of a water-scarce region - Ramallah has more rainfall than London - Israel has deliberately denied Palestinians control over their water resources and successfully set the ground for water domination, granting itself a further tool to exercise its hegemony over the occupied population and territory."¹³

¹³ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/06/israel-water-tool-dominate-palestinians-160619062531348.html>

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Appendix 2

Notes on Relevant International Laws and Conventions

UN General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 181, 1947 authorising the partition of Palestine

UNGA Resolution 194, 1948: authorising conditional right of return of Palestinian refugees

UN Security Council Resolution 242, 1967 calls on Arab states to recognise Israel's right to exist but has a clause calling for Israel to withdraw from territories conquered in 1967. Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005 but its blockade of Gaza was commenced in 2007. Israel is protected from implementation moves by US veto power.

The duties of an occupying power are spelled out in the **1907 Hague Regulations** (Articles 42-56) and the **1949 Fourth Geneva Convention** (Articles 27-34) Occupation is temporary and does not imply sovereignty. As an occupying power, Israel is obliged to maintain basic services for the population, such as water and sanitation. The destruction or seizure of enemy property is forbidden (and it is argued that the water of the Mountain Aquifer lying beneath the West Bank is the property of the Palestinian residents. Recognition of the State of Palestine may incur Israel's loss of the eastern part of the Mountain Aquifer). The occupying power can make use of natural resources but "*it must safeguard their capital value*"(Hague, Article 55).

UNGA accepted the **UN Watercourses Convention 1997**, applying to ground water as well as surface water, and providing a framework for governing water courses and for water sharing. Israel is the only state in the region that has refused to sign. Israel wants to continue monopolising water from the West Bank Mountain aquifer, and it also has issues about water-sharing with other states where water sources are contiguous. Lebanon has defied Israeli resistance, for example, by pumping water from the Wazzani Spring within its border, which feeds the source of the Hasbani River, flowing over the border into the Sea of Galilee.¹

Australia was one of only four countries voting against a **2003 UNGA Resolution ordering Israel to destroy its "security wall" around/through the West Bank**. The wall cuts deep into Palestinian land, in some cases separating wells and/or farmland from traditional owners. 144 UN member states supported this resolution. Only 4, including USA, Australia and Israel, voted against.²

UNGA Resolution 64/292 of 28 July 2010 states that adequate water and sanitation is essential to the realisation of all other human rights. WHO guidelines provide the basis for minimum standards of consumption and water should be affordable, not exceeding 3% of household income. In many if not most cases Israel fails in these obligations. Palestinians sometimes pay around 8%

In **2010 the UN Human Rights Council** adopted a resolution recognising the right to water and sanitation.

¹ Sami Alami, *Water and Security in the Jordan River*, American University of Beirut, Lebanon, 2015

² Kirk Semple, "UN Resolution Condemns Israeli Barrier," *New York Times*, 22.10. 2003

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Appendix 3

Global Water Superpower ?

Some of Israel's much touted water management systems have unsustainable environmental impacts. The program introduced Professor Weisbrod as a "*leading Israeli water conservationist*," and billed Israel as a "*world leader in conservation*," however Israel has some serious environmental problems which were not discussed.

Regarding the treatment and recycling of over 80% of waste water for agricultural - not all chemical pollutants can be removed and in 1970 health problems erupted due to spraying of vegetable crops with treated waste water. Since then efforts have been made to use underground drip systems to avoid spraying, but the longterm cumulative effects on soil quality are unknown.

Desalination plants are another concern in Israel. The Israeli Union for Environmental Defense, in a 2010 report, called for a moratorium on new desalination plants due to environmental damage, including increased greenhouse gas emissions. Disposal of brine from desal plants is a serious problem. Professor Weisbrod stated that there are already five desal plants in Israel, with two more about to come online, so that Israel is now dependent on these for 75% of its potable water. This was presented as an achievement but the point should have been made that this is largely because the ground water aquifers have been over-exploited, over-pumped, polluted and depleted.

With all seven plants lined up along the Mediterranean coast, the impact on the sea of huge loads of brine waste will have serious implications on marine life and ecosystems.

The cost of producing desalinated water is a further issue. Professor Weisbrod is able to pay for the cost of water for his garden, but admitted that Israelis pay a lot more for their water than we do, and many poorer Israelis must find the cost prohibitive, while Palestinians connected to the Israeli water network are charged five times as much again.

Also, when a desal plant has technical problems, the expense can be excessive. Professor Weisbrod avoided any mention of the "*decade of technical problems and delays in constructing a giant desalination plant in Ashdod. Mekorot has amassed a debt of 1.2 billion shekels.*" The plant may never work at full capacity due to "*faulty construction and engineering.*" As a result, the plant is expected to lose 35 million shekels per year. A quarter of the staff have been fired and the delay has exposed Mekorot to government penalties of 70 million shekels. (*Haaretz*, 7.5.2017)

This serves as a reminder of the advantages of natural water resources, but here Israeli stewardship has failed dismally. Two major rivers, the Jordan and the Auja, or Yarkon in Hebrew, are hopelessly polluted and depleted. Dams and pumping stations have diverted almost 90% of the Jordan's water, according to a reporter from the *Guardian*, who added that "*just about the only thing that flows for large parts of the year, keeping the river alive, is sewage.*" (Chris McGeal, *The Guardian*, 9.3.2005).

Industrial waste and chemicals, raw sewage and effluent from commercial fish farms go down river to pollute the Sea of Galilee. The Upper Jordan River is the source for this large freshwater lake, also known as Lake Kenneret. Last year it was near record low levels. Contamination is so bad that it was reported that two rare turtles had died on a beach as a result (*Haaretz*, 16.4.2018)

The water level in the Dead Sea to the south, where the Lower Jordan ends, has dropped 25 metres since Israel dammed the river, and continues to drop by 1.35 metres p.a., according to EcoPeace.

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There is simply not sufficient flow in the Jordan to top it up. As the water recedes large sinkholes have opened up due to dissolving mineral salts underneath, *“destroying resorts and infrastructure on the edge of the sea.”* Eric Tlozek, ABC Middle East Correspondent, *“I really thought it’d be bigger: The Battle to Save the Holy Water of the Jordan River,* ABC News, 23.12.2018)

Signed by representatives from the following organisations

Australians for Justice and Peace in Palestine
Australian Friends of Palestine Association
Cultural Media
Jews Against the Occupation
Palestine Fair Trade Australia
Coalition for Justice and Peace in Palestine
Australians for Palestine
Women for Palestine
Australian Palestinian Professionals Association / BDS Australia
Friends of Hebron
Emeritus Professor University of Sydney
Sydney Staff for BDS
Friends of Bethlehem
Coalition for Justice and Peace in Palestine
Northern Beaches Committee for Palestine
Greens for Palestine