

# Thirst Amidst the Heat of Oslo and Wadi Araba!

(Translated)

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**By: Dr. Mo'men Abdullah**

As summer approaches, talk intensifies regarding a crisis that persists year-round yet is exacerbated by the summer heat and the scorching sun. Its consequences erupt and spread, extending far beyond the farmer and the field owner—leaving crops withered and the land parched—in a region otherwise blessed with abundant rainfall and plentiful water! Is this a riddle? Or is it the tragedy of political agreements signed by politicians who assumed the roles of sovereign leaders? How did this come to pass? What are the resulting impacts? How are the authorities handling this crisis, and how can it be resolved?

People in the West Bank suffer from water shortages every year, particularly during the summer. When examining the causes of this deficit—in order to objectively diagnose the crisis—it becomes evident that the water supply has been compromised by political agreements, most notably the Oslo Accords, in much the same way that the land and air suffered harm and loss for the benefit of the Jewish entity. This is because the Jewish entity did not view the water issue as a mere detail to be bypassed or deferred. Instead, the Jewish entity regarded the water issue as a critical strategic issue essential for controlling the land and displacing its inhabitants. It also viewed water as a matter of "vital space"—an expansionist necessity within the region. Chaim Weizmann, the Zionist leader, articulated this in a 1920 letter to David Lloyd George, noting that the waters of the Jordan and Yarmouk Rivers were insufficient for the Jewish entity's needs and suggesting that the Litani River could bridge the gap. Similar sentiments were reflected in projects exploring the diversion of part of the Nile River to the Sinai and subsequently to the Negev—all of which predated the 1948 declaration of the entity's establishment.

It is not politically unfair to assert that the thirst afflicting the people, the trees, and the land today stems from a political climate initiated by the Oslo Accords—a climate that persists to this day—and that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) bears responsibility for this. This assessment does not overlook the Jewish entity and the cancerous projects it pursued—even prior to its inception—to seize control of water resources in Palestine and the surrounding areas. While the entity had initiated these water-control projects decades before Oslo, the Accords empowered it to succeed and solidified its grip. That agreement designated the water issue as a final status matter—supposed to be resolved within five years—and placed the water issue and resources under the authority of a joint committee where the Jewish entity held the upper hand. Consequently, full control over water resources and access remained in its hands pending a resolution within that half-decade. Thus, the Oslo II Agreement—specifically Article 40 regarding water—and the five-year timeframe served as the mechanism that gave the Jewish entity control over the water supply, allowing it to open the tap for its settlers while shutting it off to the people of Palestine.

This brief political overview serves to clarify that the crisis does not stem from population growth, urban expansion, or climate change. While these are indeed contributing factors, they are natural issues with specific technical and administrative

solutions in a state that possesses sovereignty over its water and land. The real disaster lies in imposing such administrative solutions onto the crisis in the West Bank—as the Palestinian Authority does. It promotes solutions and regulations, most recently the activation of the so-called "Licensing, Drilling, Rehabilitation of Wells, and Groundwater Extraction" system. This is framed as an administrative measure to curb groundwater depletion, limit the proliferation of wells, ensure equitable water distribution, and prevent pollution!

In doing so, however, the Palestinian Authority is treating the disease with poison. How can a deficit reaching nearly 100 million cubic meters across the agricultural, industrial, and residential sectors be addressed by cracking down on wells that have become the lifeline for people, crops, and the land itself against the encroaching thirst? How can it be resolved by pursuing, exposing, and registering wells—many of which, especially in Area C, are deemed illegal under the laws of the Jewish entity with whom the Authority coordinates on administrative arrangements and files? Consequently, the Palestinian Authority's exposure of these wells implies that the Jewish entity will shut down many of them now—or all of them in the future—amidst ceaseless, accelerating settlement and displacement projects! How can bills amounting to thousands of dinars support farmers who invest their time and effort not to reap profits, but merely to secure a livelihood—or simply to sustain their homes, orchards, and fields in areas coveted day and night by settlers seeking to seize the land and expel its inhabitants? How can people be penalized for seeking water when you fail to provide it? Who ought to pay the price? Is it the one who combined folly with capitulation at the negotiating table, or the one who clings steadfastly to his land and its water?

In conclusion, while it is true that the water issue—like the issues of Al-Quds, Haifa, Jaffa, the Jordan River, and Tiberias—can only be resolved through an ideological mindset that confronts the colonialist mentality of Weizmann and his successors, and through military might capable of transcending the Nile, the Jordan, and Tiberias to dismantle their Jewish entity and quench the thirst of the people of Palestine and the Islamic Ummah; one cannot overlook the Palestinian Authority's actions regarding this issue and the dangers they pose to the people of Palestine. It is imperative to confront these actions before thirst turns into acute deprivation—a scenario where farmers are billed for irrigating land eyed by settlers, where securing a water tanker becomes a major burden, and where water is sold in dollars! Water supplies are restricted to the pipelines of the Mekorot company, from which the Palestinian Authority currently purchases approximately 80 million cubic meters annually—out of a total of 220 million cubic meters available for consumption. It is worth noting the existence of an unmet annual deficit that reached 58 million cubic meters in 2018; current estimates suggest this figure has risen to 100 million cubic meters.

It is noteworthy that the Wadi Araba Treaty is mentioned in the title because it parallels the Oslo Accords in terms of granting Jewish access to water resources—specifically those of the Jordan River. Just as the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) conceded water rights under Oslo, the Jordanian regime did the same in Wadi Araba; both the Authority and Jordan purchase water in this manner. There are further details beyond the scope of this article—details left for readers to explore, or for a future article to elaborate upon.