

80,000 Palestinians Left Without Tap Water for Three Months

By [RT](#)

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Photo: Reuters / Ammar Awad

Tens of thousands of Palestinian residents in East Jerusalem have spent three months without running water, despite petitions and calls from human rights bodies after an Israeli water utility company stopped supplies in March.

Hagihon, Jerusalem's water utility company, stopped regular supplies of running water to several neighborhoods in occupied East Jerusalem, such as Shu'fat Refugee Camp, Ras Khamis, Ras Sh'hadeh and Dahiyat a-Salam, said a statement from the website of B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories.

The camps are located inside Jerusalem's municipal boundaries and isolated from the rest of the city by the Separation Barrier.

According to B'Tselem, some households in these camps *"have been completely cut off from the water supply"* while others *"receive water intermittently."*

*"As for the rest, the water pressure in the pipes is so low that the water does not reach the faucets,"*says the statement.

As a result, between 60,000 and 80,000 Palestinians, the majority of whom are permanent Israeli residents, have been left without a regular water supply, adds the organization.

According to B'Tselem, the fact that people have to live without a proper water supply is but *"another outcome of the severe and ongoing neglect of the residents in the Jerusalem neighborhoods separated by the Separation Barrier from the rest of East Jerusalem."*

"The construction of the barrier and the isolation of these neighborhoods have led to a state of neglect even more severe than that endured by East Jerusalem neighborhoods for decades," says the group.

Meanwhile, the local residents continue looking for running water in the camps. Families have no choice but to buy bottled water and limit their consumption – drinking, showering and laundry – to minimum.



AFP Photo / Hazem Bader

"Every other week, I take the kids to my family's home in Ras al-'Amud [Palestinian neighborhood in East Jerusalem] to shower. We go by bus and it takes us an hour to get there," Linda Abu Rajeb told B'Tselem.

She said that her husband has to walk over to his brother's house, which is nearly a kilometer away to get water.

When the running water was stopped back in March, people spent at least three weeks calling the Hagihon Company and the Jerusalem Municipality to restore the water supply in their neighborhoods.

On March 25, local residents, community leaders and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) wrote a petition to the Israeli High Court of Justice over negligence that has cut water supplies to tens of thousands of people.

"This is a humanitarian crisis of the first degree, and infringes on the right to water, dignity and health, especially of children and infants, the elderly, the sick and persons with disabilities," said the petition.

According to ACRI, the water infrastructure in the affected areas can support only 15, 000 people, while there are more than 80,000 in the camps.

Hagihon in its turn said that "security problems (including employees needing to have a police escort) and frequent attacks against infrastructure," were preventing the company from carrying out its maintenance work properly in the Palestinian neighborhoods.

On 2 April, 2014, the Court told Israeli officials to give a response to the petition within 60 days. The deadline is set on the first week of June 2014.

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