

Israel Authorises Mining of Natural Gas off Gaza Shore in Defiance of Palestinian Sovereignty

By [Global Research](#)

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Global Research Editor's Note

This is the real reason for the maritime blockade of Gaza: Gaza's offshore natural gas. Denying Palestine its rights over Gaza territorial waters is intent upon appropriating Gaza's extensive reserves of natural gas.

Michel Chossudovsky, June 13, 2011

Tel Aviv - PNN - The Israeli Ministry of Infrastructure has demanded permission from the gas company Nobel Energy to start working in developing the natural gas field that was found off the Gaza Strip shoreline, under the pretext that Israel fears gas shortages in the coming year.

 In a press statement on Monday, the Israeli Ministry of Infrastructure said that it officially requested permission from Nobel Energy to submit a work programme to dig and develop gas fields by July.

The ministry explained that the reason official permission has been sought before digging the oil is because the field is close to the territorial waters of the Gaza Strip.

Israel gets natural gas from Egypt through an agreement in which Israel pays less than internationally recognised prices to Egypt. After the Egyptian uprising and the toppling of Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian people demanded that the channeling of gas to Israel would be stopped until a new agreement could be reached, so that the Egyptian people could benefit first from their natural resources.

A large concentration of natural gas was found off the Gaza shoreline, and the British Gas group along with Lebanese partners were given the right to dig there and sell the gas during an agreement that was signed in November 1999 with the Palestinian Authority.

The British company had already set up two gas wells called Gaza Marine 1 and Gaza Marine 2. According to the British Gas group, the natural reservoir off the Gaza shore is estimated at 1.5 trillion cubic meters, at a net worth of around \$4 billion US dollars.

However, Chossudovsky, a Canadian economist, estimated that the amount of gas in Palestine is much more, adding that it could make the future Palestinian state as rich as Kuwait, due to the average population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Nobel Energy is a US based company based in New York that digs oil and natural gas internationally.

Dmitry Dliani, Fatah top official, commented on the Israeli Ministry of Infrastructure decision as a license to steal the Gaza gas, as part of Israeli attacks on Palestinian rights. Dliani demanded international protection for the Palestinian natural gas reservoir off the Gaza shore.

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