
Gaza Lacks Adequate Water and Electricity

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Israeli NGOs sounded the alarm last week that a million Gazans had inadequate water and sanitation services. Drinking water is now mixed with sewage or salt. Damaged pipes spill raw sewage into the streets. Most of the water wells in Gaza are in the “buffer zone” controlled by the Israeli military in eastern Gaza. These pumps are no longer working because there is not enough electricity to run them, and because the Israeli military will not allow maintenance crews into the buffer zone to repair them.

Eight of the 10 electric power lines have been destroyed, most of which are also behind Israel's buffer zone. The chair of Gaza's electricity distribution system says that often times Israeli armored vehicles have just run over the transmission poles. A couple of days ago Israel shelled the only power plant in Gaza. The best estimates are that it will take up to a year to repair the plant. Gaza is now running on 10 percent of its electricity and 90 percent of Palestinians have no electricity.

Not only have a couple dozen medical facilities been attacked by Israel in the past three weeks, but even in the hospitals still open, post-operative deaths are occurring because of the lack of clean water and extreme power cuts.

As Navi Pillay, The U.N. high commissioner for human rights, has said repeatedly it is the obligation of Israel to not attack basic infrastructure and to provide for the needs of Palestinians, especially water and electricity.

