

## Israel, Palestine and Jordan: Water Rights and the Red - Dead Sea Canal. A Zionist Project?

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The canal was another strategic triumph for Israel’s conniving diplomacy even after the project was reduced to about one-tenth of its original size due to serious economic and environmental concerns raised by the World Bank.



The Zionist-envisioned project was repackaged and sponsored by Jordan as a must to save the Dead Sea, and building a large desalination plant providing each Israel and Jordan with eight billion to 13 billion gallons of fresh water annually.

According to Israeli and international environmentalists, Israeli government’s policies of over pumping from the Sea of Galilee and Jordan River – serving Jewish only colonies – was the main cause for the loss of nearly 30 per cents of the Dead Sea’s mass in the last 50 years.

Herzl’s repackaged vision includes articles tacitly granting Israel exclusive water rights in the supposedly shared Sea of Galilee and Jordan River’s water. For the tri-party agreement empowers Israel to transfer close to 13 billion gallons of fresh water from those bodies to Jordan and to sell the state of Palestine 8bn gallons of drinking water at preferential prices.

Even more cynical is for the state of Palestine to purchase water from Israel -mind you at a special discount - while Israel continues to expropriate West Bank's water aquifers for the benefit of illegal Jewish-only colonies for free.

In addition to political concerns, environmentalists have warned that introducing new water composition from the Red sea brings a host of new invasive photosynthetic organisms which could lead to drastic negative consequences affecting the unique natural system of the Dead Sea.

Unlikely to solve the Dead Sea environmental degradation, international and Israeli environmentalists have alternatively suggested that "the reestablishment of the Jordan River to its natural state was a better solution to the decline of the Dead Sea than the proposed canal."



While it would receive roughly half of the desalinated water from the project, the 100 miles brine pipeline will run exclusively through Jordanian territories to circumvent objections by Israeli environmental groups.

Lacking proper environmental oversight, a credible rupture in the high saline pipeline - running along known active earthquake fault - would cause irreparable damage for a main source of Jordan's fresh groundwater in Wadi Araba.

Being the only party with positive return and no potential risks, the agreement provides Israel a free safety net to escape responsibility for the Dead Sea's environmental calamity while realising an old Zionist strategic military vision adding a natural water course on Israel's eastern borders. Economically, this project places Israeli water companies in a unique position to gain the most in building the waterway, associated desalination and power generation plants.

Jordan, on the other hand, is taking the biggest long term risk since a probable structural failure in the Canal system would lead to an incurable disaster for both the agriculture and ecosystem in the Jordanian valley.

In purchasing Israeli water, Palestine is sanctioning Israel's theft of its water aquifers from

occupied West Bank, while allowing Israel to continue syphoning the only lifeline for the Dead Sea.

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