

Palestinian Rights: Israeli Army Forcibly Evicts Nonviolent Demonstrators at the Dead Sea

Demonstrators demand water rights and justice, one Palestinian activist detained

By [Popular Struggle Coordination Committee](#)

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Today, over 100 activists came together at the northern banks of the Dead Sea to reclaim Palestinian rights to land and its natural resources amidst the deepening Israeli occupation of the West Bank. After decades of apartheid and colonialization, and amidst the ongoing threats of full annexation, the demonstration was led by Palestinian activists from across the West Bank and included Israeli and international human rights defenders.

The activists arrived at 10:30am at the site of a former Dead Sea hotel and restaurant, near the illegal Israeli settlements of Kalya and Almog, with signs calling for a reclamation of Palestinian sovereignty over its land and resources. According to a statement released by the Popular Struggle Coordination Committee (PSCC), the activists came together to protest “being deprived of our rights to our land, water and natural resources as a colonized people.”

Joined by Israeli and international solidarity activists, the PSCC “aims to reclaim Palestinian access to water for basic drinking needs, agriculture and livelihoods, and recreation, in the face of colonization.” In response to this non-violent demonstration, dozens of Israeli soldiers forcibly evicted the activists, arrest attempts were made, and one Palestinian activist was detained. Even after eviction, the Israeli army set up checkpoints along the road, to ID Palestinian demonstrators as they left the site.

For decades, Israel’s illegal settlement regime has exploited Palestinian natural resources and threatens the right of the Palestinian people to basic water needs. While the World Health Organization recommends 100 liters of water per person per day, Palestinians receive an average of 80 liters /day, while Israelis, including in settlements, receive an average of 280 liters/day. As today’s use of force demonstrates, Israel’s concerted efforts to maintain its control over Palestinian land and its natural resources comes at the expense of Palestinian rights to development, health, and adequate standards of living.

Thus far in 2019, Israel has demolished water related infrastructure across the West Bank and continues to deny Palestinians the right to repair existing water networks, dig wells, or carry out any work to achieve basic water access. Over 60 Palestinian springs have been taken over by Israeli settlements, and Palestinians have no access or legal allocations to the Jordan River or the Dead Sea. These bans are compounded with the on-going illegal policy of land confiscation, settlement expansion, property demolition, and wall construction.

The PSCC further notes that

“the systematic restrictions on our access to our own land, natural resources and water, including the Dead Sea and the Jordan River, has dealt a heavy blow to the agriculture sector, which is one of the main pillars of Palestinian economy and heritage.”

As youth from over 200 nations led a strike this month, demanding urgent actions on climate change, today’s demonstrators called on global leaders to join the Palestinian struggle for water justice, as communities lacking the basic access to land and water security are more vulnerable to the effects on climate change in the region. In this context, the action demonstrated a Palestinian reclamation of water resources to not only meet basic needs for drinking, agriculture, and livelihoods, but also for rights to this critical resource for generations to come. The PSCC also drew attention to the environmental concerns of Israel’s water policies, noting that “when Israel denies us access to our water resources in the Jordan Valley, it effects not only the Palestinian livelihood, but also has detrimental effects on the environment, as the Dead Sea is shrinking by 1 meter/year.”

Joining Palestinian activists from across the region were Israeli and international activists who are supporting Palestinian efforts to reclaim and remain on their lands in recent years.

Sahar Vardi from Jerusalem said,

“I am standing here in solidarity with my Palestinian partners because it is our duty, as Israelis, to resist these policies of resource theft, which are done in our names. At a time where Israeli politicians say that they will annex Area C, even further depriving Palestinians from their lands and resources, and in places like here, at the Dead Sea, we have no time to waste. It is our responsibility as Israelis to resist this in our actions and not just with words. It is also the responsibility of the international community to move from words to action, and sanction human rights violations and breaches of international law.”

Dana Mandler, a member of All That’s Left: Anti-Occupation Collective in Jerusalem said,

“We come together because we believe in justice, equality and freedom for all. Water is a basic right and Palestinians must have that right – full access and agency over water resources – guaranteed.”

The PSCC concludes its statement by noting that

“our resistance represents a refusal to allow the perpetuation of the reality of the segregation walls, violence, and discrimination to stand in our way. We will tirelessly continue to march forward together, rebuilding, where the occupation destroys, preserving life, where the occupier shatters it, and planting, where the settler-colonial regime razes and uproots. “

After decades of apartheid and colonialization, the nonviolent demonstration today was an act of resistance against the threat of annexation, made by Israeli leaders and its global defenders, by enacting Palestinian sovereignty over its borders and its environment.

Organizers are calling on those who stand in solidarity around the world to hold decision-makers responsible, and for those who can, to join the struggle for Palestinian rights to its land and the water that flows above and beneath its surface, so that basic needs of its people are met.

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