# The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), and the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) Issue a joint Press Release on the Occasion of World Water Day; on March 22th, 2021

## Under the theme of "Water Source Security: Is desalination the way to go?", the World celebrates the World Water Day 2021.

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), and the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) issue a joint press release on the occasion of World Water Day; on March 22th, 2021. This year, World Water Day comes under the theme of "Water Source Security: Is desalination the way to go?", according to the announcement of the United Nations

### Although all Palestinian Households have access to improved drinking water sources, the quality of the water is critical

### 99.8% of Households use improved drinking water source

The availability of clean and accessible water for all is an essential part of the goals of sustainable development goals (SDGs). It is the first target of goal 6, which focuses on equitable access to an improved drinking water by 2030.

With regard to Palestine in terms of the said goal, the results of Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019-2020 (PMICS6) showed that 99.8% of households use an improved drinking water source (piped into dwelling, protected dug well/ protected spring, rainwater, bottled water and public tab); 99.9% in the West Bank and 99.6% in Gaza Strip.
As for the type of localities, these percentages were distributed to 99.8% in urban and rural localities, compared to 99.6% in camps.

### Only 4% of household members in Gaza Strip have access to safely managed water that is free of pollution

As for safely managed water resources (defined as improved sources, used in the dwelling, available when needed and free from pollution (free of E-Coli bacteria)) (SDG 6.1.1), the survey data indicates that 39.5% of household members in Palestine have access to safely managed water, and this percentage fluctuates among the West Bank, in which it reaches 66.2% of household members, compared to 4.3% of household members in Gaza Strip. As for the type of localities, these percentages were distributed to 35.5% in urban, 67.1% in rural, and 25.2% of household members in camps.

**And based on water statistics issued by Water Authority for the year 2019:**

### 4.1 MCM desalinated drinking water

The amount of desalinated drinking water in Gaza Strip was only 4.1 million $m^3$ in 2019. Also, according to the data of the Palestinian Water Authority, Palestine began

producing quantities of desalinated water, where the percentage of which is expected to increase in the coming years; with the start of operating limited quantity of desalination plants in Gaza Strip. Thus, this percentage rises significantly with the implementation of the central desalination plant program.

**The daily allocation per capita from consumed water is less than the internationally recommended rate, and it is decreasing**

The daily allocation per capita from consumed water for domestic purposes is 81.9 liter/capita/day in Palestine: 85.6 (l/c/d) in the West Bank, while it is 77 (l/c/d) in Gaza Strip in 2019, with a decrease of about 6 liters compared to last year; as a result of population increase, and by taking the high percentage of water pollution in Gaza Strip and calculating the quantities of water suitable for human use from the available quantities, the per capita share of fresh water is only 22.4 liters per day.

Taking into account the discrepancy between governorates, achieving justice in the distribution among localities is one of the main challenges facing the State of Palestine. It is worth noting that the average Palestinian water consumption per capita is still less than the minimum recommended level globally according to the standards of the World Health Organization, which is 100 liters per day. This is as a result of the Israeli control over more than 85% of the Palestinian water.

**More than 97% of the Water Pumped from the Coastal Aquifer does not Meet the Standards of the World Health Organization**

The amount of water extracted from the coastal aquifer for domestic use was 187.6 million cubic meters (MCM) in Gaza Strip in 2019. However, this quantity is obtained via unsafe pumping that jeopardizes the sustainability of the source, as the basin sustainable yield should not exceed 50-60 MCM a year. More than 97% of the water pumped from the coastal aquifer in Gaza Strip does not meet the water quality standards of the World Health Organization, leading to the depletion of groundwater reserves, where the groundwater level in the coastal aquifer reached 19 meters below sea level*.

The above-mentioned numbers warned of a real disaster in Gaza Strip, which made the Palestinian Water Authority to intensify its efforts to save the water situation and work to mitigate its severe effect on the daily life of about 2 million persons in Gaza Strip. It is expected for these indicators to improve in the coming years, with operating strategic water and sewage projects in Gaza.

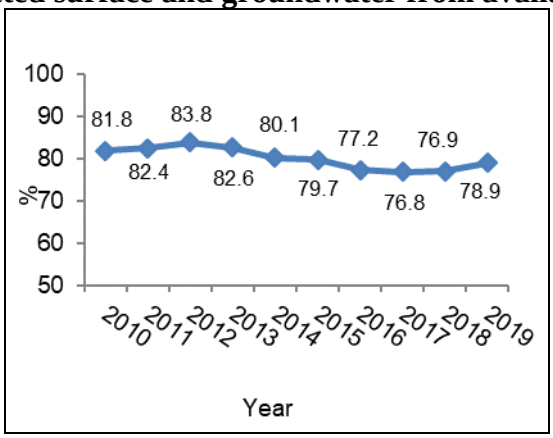
**The Israeli occupation's control of the water of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea is a major reason not to use surface water, and 79% of Available Water is from Surface and Groundwater**

Data showed that the percentage of the exploitation of surface and groundwater from available water in the year 2019 was high with an average of 79%.

It should be noted that Palestinians have been denied by the Israeli occupation to access and extract water from the Jordan River since 1967, which was estimated of about 250 MCM*.

On the other hand, the quantity of water pumped from the Palestinian wells in the West Bank in 2019 was 101.3 MCM from Eastern Aquifer, Western Aquifer and North-Eastern Aquifer.

**Percentage of abstracted surface and groundwater from available water, 2010-2019**




## 20% of the Available Water in Palestine is Purchased from the Israeli Water Company "Mekorot"

With scarce water and Israeli restrictions on access to resources, Palestinian cities are forced to purchase water from the Israeli water company “Mekorot”. In 2019, they purchased 84.2 MCM, which represented 20% of the water available in Palestine (417.9 MCM). Additionally, 40.6 MCM of the water were produced from the Palestinian springs while 289 MCM are pumped from groundwater wells and 4.1 MCM desalinated drinking water.

By subtracting 45.5% of the water available to Palestinians that is unsuitable for human use, by linking it to the quantities of polluted water in Gaza Strip, the quantities of water suitable for domestic use available to the Palestinians are only 219.8 MCM, including purchased and desalinated water.

**Note:** Data mentioned in this press release excludes those parts of Jerusalem which were annexed by Israeli Occupation in 1967**.**

*** Sources:**

Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. 2021. Palestinian Water Authority, 2019. Water Information System. unpublished data.