



# ORSAM WATER BULLETIN

Weekly Bulletin by ORSAM Water Research Programme

Events-News-Politics-Projects-Environment-ClimateChange-Neighbourhoods-Cooperation-Disputes-Scarcity and more



### **Team assess earthquake impact on Iraqi dams**

A team from the World Bank and the Iraq Ministry of Water Resources is evaluating the impact of recent earthquakes on the Darbandikhan and Dokan Dams in Iraq.

At the request of H.E. Dr. Haider Al-Abadi, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, the World Bank mobilized a technical support mission to visit Sulaimaniyah Province to assess the impact of the 7.3 magnitude earthquake that struck the Iraq-Iran border on November 12. The visit came after concerns were raised about the safety and management of these two dams two 56-year old multipurpose dams.

“We highly value the partnership between the Government of Iraq and the World Bank office in Baghdad and we appreciate the Bank’s prompt response and cooperation in answering the Ministry’s request for assistance in dealing with this emergency,” commented H.E. Hassan Al Janabi, Minister of Water Resources.

The aim of the World Bank’s team is to support the Ministry of Water Resources in preparing a detailed diagnostic of any damage to the dams, review the emergency preparedness plan, and prepare an action plan for managing the structure.

The mission reported that dam operator and the technical staff of the Ministry of Water Resources were found to be managing the post-earthquake situation in a highly satisfactory manner. The extent of the further technical support needed will be based on the mission’s detailed findings.

“The World Bank is working hand in hand with the Government of Iraq teams at the dam locations in carrying out a deep dive assessment of the damage caused by the earthquake and putting together a rehabilitation plan to address immediate and longer term concerns,” said Yara Salem, World Bank Iraq Country Manager.

29/11/2017 online at: <http://www.waterpowermagazine.com/news/newsteam-assess-earthquake-impact-on-iraqi-dams-5989288>

### **Water crisis will lead to agricultural disaster in Iraq – Governor**

Water crisis in southern governorates will lead to an agricultural disaster in Iraq, Babel governor Sadiq Madlol revealed Thursday.

In press statements, Madlol said southern governorates claim that Babel is the main reason behind the water crisis.

The water crisis has emerged because the amount of water releases is small and not enough to meet the needs of Babel Governorate, he noted.

Water shortage has caused many problems, including over 22 water collectors ceasing to operate. The irrigation percentage is estimated at 28%, he further stated.

Ministry of Water Resources' water releases will impact the percentage of cultivated land in Babel, he added.

Babel governor has also called on the government to interfere to prevent an agricultural disaster.

Citizens obtain drinking water from water tankers and they are not sufficient to meet their needs, Madlol added.

Iraq is facing a dire water crisis due to the decrease in the quantities and degradation in the qualities of the water reaching its borders with the two rivers Tigris and Euphrates.

The Euphrates and Tigris rivers provide more than 98% of Iraq's water demands for the various purposes.

01/12/2017 online at: <http://www.thebaghdadpost.com/en/story/20359/Water-crisis-will-lead-to-agricultural-disaster-in-Iraq-Governor>

### **Desalination Curbs Water Scarcity in Coastal Regions**

A considerable amount of potable water in northern and southern coastal towns is provided by water desalination units, the deputy head of the National Water and Wastewater Engineering Company said.

"Some 55 desalination facilities, with a capacity of producing 129,000 cubic meters of water per day, supply water for consumption or irrigation to regions straddling the northern and southern coasts of Iran," Ali Asghar Qaneh was also quoted as saying by IRNA on Wednesday.

According to the official, the units, completed at an estimated cost of \$170 million, have been up and running since 2016.

"Plans are in place to sign new contracts with the private sector to undertake similar ventures to satisfy people's need for safe drinking water, especially in the Persian Gulf littoral provinces," Qaneh said, adding that building more desalination plants in different areas adjacent to the Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman tops the priority list.

Reportedly, one project is to be carried out in collaboration with Russia. Tehran has signed a \$10 billion deal with Moscow to build two new nuclear power plants in Bushehr.

Commenting on the socioeconomic impact of the initiative, the official said tapping into seawater to supply people with potable water is high on the agenda, as it is a much more sensible approach to sustain a steady supply of water rather than deplete the already dwindling underground water resources, most of which are on the verge of drying up.

Pointing to growing global demand for desalination units, he said, "Between 2010 and 2016, total investment in this field has witnessed a 9% rise, standing at \$88 billion."

The official noted that the substantial rise in demand indicates two facts: the first of which is the major role that seas can play in providing coast dwellers with freshwater.

The massive investment also highlights the fact that the quality of underground water is deteriorating. Asked about serious challenges facing the expansion of such units, Qaneh said large-scale investment, exorbitant maintenance cost and the lack of cutting-edge know-how are among the most underlying constraints impeding the development of these facilities.

### Water Crisis

Experts, including Abolfazl Hassanbeigi, a member of Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Commission, believe that transferring water from the Sea of Oman, the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea through pipelines to dry and water-stressed regions is the most effective strategy to tackle the growing water crisis in Iran. According to Hassanbeigi, 16 Iranian provinces covering nearly 60% of the population are on the verge of water tension and addressing the ever-growing issue of water shortage should be fundamentally dealt with by the end of the Sixth Five-Year Economic Development Plan (2017-22) before reaching a point of no return.

Pointing to the Persian Gulf littoral states' approach to meet their much-needed demand for potable water, Hassanbeigi said, "Close to 9 billion cubic meters of Persian Gulf water are desalinated per year, of which 5 bcm are consumed by Saudi Arabia and the rest used by Kuwait, the UAE, Qatar and Bahrain."

According to the official, these countries satisfy the lion's share of their needs for drinking water from marine resources.

"To meet the demand of the country's population of around 85 million, Iran is in dire need of 50 bcm of desalinated water," he said, adding that the Energy Ministry is required by the Sixth Plan to deal with the exacerbating problem by transferring water from northern and southern marine sources.

30/11/2017 online at: <https://financialtribune.com/articles/energy/77023/desalination-curbs-water-scarcity-in-coastal-regions>

### **Two water projects inaugurated at Naur and Wadi Al Seer**

Water Minister Hazem El Naser on Saturday laid the cornerstone for Naur and Wadi Al Seer water purification station and the sewage networks projects.

The two schemes were co-funded by the Export-Import Bank of Korea and a grant from the US government, at a total cost of \$76 million, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

During the ceremony, El Naser listened to a briefing about the Iraq Al Amir's tourist project, presented by Mohammad Abbadi, director of the project and Planning Unit at the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM).

Abbadi stressed the importance of cooperation between the ministry and the GAM.

El Naser noted that the ministry is planning to float a tender in the near future to move these channels and reconnect them in a way that does not affect water conveyance to farmers.

He called on stakeholders at the ministry to work on cleaning the springs in Iraq Al Amir, and establishing new water channels in the area, in light of the location's status as a major tourist attraction in the Kingdom.

The minister praised the municipality's efforts in developing the infrastructure of Iraq Al Amir.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Tourism is implementing rehabilitation and cleaning works at various areas in Iraq Al Amir, in addition to floating a tender to rehabilitate Qasr Al Abd and establish walking areas and parks within the facility.

02/12/2017 online at: <http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/two-water-projects-inaugurated-naur-and-wadi-al-seer>

### **Jordan's water crisis is made worse by a feud with Israel**

The Dead Sea is dying. Half a century ago its hyper-salty, super-pungent waters stretched 80km from north to south. That has shrunk to just 48km at its longest point. The water level is falling by more than a meter per year. All but a trickle from its source, the Jordan River, is now used up before it reaches the sea. "It will never disappear, because it has underground supplies, but it will be like a small pond in a very big hole," says Munqeth Mehyar of EcoPeace, an NGO.

Until this summer Israel and Jordan, which share the sea, were trying to slow the decline. The "Red-Dead project", as it is called, would desalinate seawater at the Jordanian port of Aqaba and pump 200m cubic meters of leftover brine into the Dead Sea each year. That would not be enough to stabilize the sea, which needs at least 800m cubic metres to stay at current levels. Still, it would help—and the project has a much more important benefit.

The World Bank defines water scarcity as less than 1,000 cubic metres per person annually. Jordan can provide less than 15% of that. The Aqaba plant would send fresh water to southern towns in both Jordan and Israel. In return for its share, Israel agreed to pump an equal amount to parched northern Jordan, where most of the population lives.

But the project is now on hold. On July 23rd a Jordanian teenager delivering furniture to the Israeli embassy stabbed a security guard. The guard opened fire, killing both his assailant and an innocent bystander. Jordan allowed the guard (and the rest of the embassy staff) to leave the country. Hours later Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, invited the guard to his office and embraced him. Jordan was furious and barred Israeli diplomats from returning until the guard is prosecuted. High-level talks on water projects—and other schemes, including an ambitious solar-energy farm—are now suspended.

Instead Jordan might, as one official puts it, "go it alone" on the Red-Dead project. This would be costly. The pipeline to the Dead Sea will need constant repairs because of the

corrosive brine it carries. Mr Mehyar reckons it could cost up to \$1bn to build and maintain for a decade. And a unilateral scheme would do nothing to ease water shortages around Amman, because it would be prohibitively expensive to ship fresh water 300km from Aqaba.

There are better ways for Jordan to help itself. Farms account for more than half of its annual consumption, but just 4% of GDP; the kingdom imports most of its food. Water is heavily subsidized—it is cheaper than in Israel or Saudi Arabia—encouraging farmers to plant thirsty crops like bananas. Though the government has taken a few modest steps to reduce demand, including a small price rise, it fears broader reforms would cause public anger.

Jordan is already one of the world's most arid countries. Climate change will make matters worse. By the end of the century, say scientists from Stanford University, Jordan could be 4°C hotter, with about a third less rain. It needs to rationalize water consumption. And Israel, which wants a stable neighbor to its east, has an interest in getting water projects back on track. “The Israelis need to think more regionally,” says Mr Mehyar. “The leadership is not taking things as seriously as it should.”

02/12/2017 online at: <https://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21731844-thirsty-kingdom-can-ill-afford-fall-out-its-neighbour-jordans-water>

### **ERC to build water supply network in Yemen**

Emirates Red Crescent to fund school refurb project in Yemen | Emirates Red Crescent to refurbish secondary school in Yemen | Emirates Red Crescent to fund renovation projects in Yemen

Emirates Red Crescent (ERC) and Lahij Governorate, Yemen has signed an agreement which will see ERC build a water supply network in Al Anad area of Yemen.

The agreement also includes installation of a solar-powered water pump, WAM reported.

Nasser AlKhabji, Governor of Lahj, thanked the UAE for providing the facility, and said the new project would contribute to easing the burden on living conditions.

04/12/2017 online at: <http://www.constructionweekonline.com/article-47385-erc-to-build-water-supply-network-in-yemen/>

### **Renaissance Dam will not harm Egypt: Ethiopia ambassador**

During a visit to Egypt's Parliament on Monday, Ethiopia's Cairo ambassador Taye Atske-Selassie Amde met with members of the African Affairs Committee to discuss a number of issues of mutual concern, including the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, which he said would not harm Egypt's interests.

Another point of discussion was the upcoming visit by Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn to Cairo, scheduled for mid-December, during which he will deliver a speech to Egypt's Parliament, Amde told Al-Masry Al-Youm.

On the construction of the dam, the ambassador expressed his country's keenness to continue negotiations with Egypt and Sudan, which have stalled due to differences over how the dam will affect Egypt's share of Nile water as specified in a 1959 treaty.

Member of the African Affairs Committee Hatem Bachat said the Ethiopian ambassador reassured MPs that Addis Ababa would not do harm to their Egyptian brothers.

Last week, Sudan's Minister of Water Resources, Irrigation and Electricity, Sileshi Bekele, said that the Egyptian government refused to recognize Sudan's full Nile water quota in accordance with the 1959 agreement, instead insisting on the current distribution. He added that his country and Ethiopia are waiting for the Egyptian side to resume negotiations.

Egypt, on the other hand, has said that the problem lies in Ethiopia's unwillingness to acknowledge that the dam may reduce Egypt's Nile water share, which its population depends on.

Bekele said Saturday that his country will not stop constructing the dam despite Egypt's protestations, the Ethiopian News Agency (ENA) reported.

Ethiopia has been constructing the Renaissance Dam since 2011 over the Blue Nile, one of Egypt's major sources of freshwater, and is expected to be completed within the coming period.

28/11/2017 online at: <http://www.egyptindependent.com/renaissance-dam-will-not-harm-egypt-ethiopia-ambassador/>

### **Egypt creating African lobby group against Ethiopia dam**

Egypt is edging forward to create an African lobby in a bid to defend its position with regards Ethiopia's Renaissance Dam, the New Khaleej reported.

Egyptian newspaper Al-Shorouk stated that the African lobby will work with an alliance of African countries and will be tasked with monitoring the crisis caused by the Ethiopian water projects.

"The construction work will not stop at the dam for one minute, and this is our country's consistent position, as it is a basic right for Ethiopia to make use of its water resources to produce energy for development and poverty eradication," Ethiopia's Minister of Irrigation said.

Egyptian water experts claim that the dam will harm Cairo's access to 55.5 billion cubic metres of Nile water. Ethiopia has stated that the dam will be a positive construction assisting in electricity generation and will not harm countries like Sudan and Egypt.

The President of the Arab Water Council, Mahmoud Abu Zeid, claimed that Ethiopia constructed the dam project without consulting the surrounding countries, contrary to international norms governing the law of the sea.

Construction of the dam began in 2011. It is located 15 kilometers east of the Ethiopia-Sudan border. The dam has been the centre of a row between Egypt and Ethiopia with Cairo accusing Addis Ababa of endangering its supply of Nile water by building the huge reservoir in Ethiopia's Benishangul-Gumuz region, near the Sudanese border.

The dam is expected to have a reservoir of about 70 billion cubic meters (about 240 billion cubic feet) which Ethiopia hopes will solve the country's power shortage problems. When built, it will become Africa's biggest hydro-electric power station, producing up to 6,000 megawatts of electricity – at a cost of \$4.2 billion.

29/11/2017 online at: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20171129-egypt-creating-african-lobby-group-against-ethiopia-dam/>

### **EBRD to fund water desalination plant in Ain Sokhna**

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) will help in establishing a water desalination plant in the Red Sea resort of Ain Sokhna and fund the related feasibility studies, Chairman of the Suez Canal Authority (SCA) Mohab Mamish said Thursday.

This came during Mamish's meeting with Phillip Barresi, Director of the EBRD, on the sidelines of the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) annual meeting in London, to discuss cooperation opportunities in the Suez Canal Economic Zone.

Mamish added that he discussed with bank's officials the provision of logistical support to infrastructure projects in the zone. Economic developments were also reviewed, including the new investment law, through which the Suez Canal Economic Zone offers investment incentives.

Mamish said that the EBRD is keen on cooperating in the economic zone, putting it as part of its strategic plan for Egypt.

Meanwhile, the SCA Head has met with British companies and businessmen, who expressed their interest in establishing projects in the Suez Canal Economic Zone, especially in the field of ports management.

The EBRD is involved in 52 projects in Egypt and it has so far invested some €2,733 million in the country.

The work of the EBRD in Egypt focuses on modernizing the financial sector, developing the agribusiness sector and municipal and infrastructure projects, while upgrading transport and telecommunications services, according to the bank's website.

30/11/2017 online at: <https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/3/34856/EBRD-to-fund-water-desalination-plant-in-Ain-Sokhna>

### **Egypt walks out of Nile Basin Discourse summit**

Egyptian officials attending the Nile Basin Discourse Summit (NBDS) on Thursday walked out of the meeting aimed at promoting development in the catchment area.

Trouble began at around 4pm when officials from Egypt showed discontent at how the summit organizers were selecting the day's main speakers. The Egyptians especially complained on why only presenters from Ethiopia were chosen to present without giving them (Egyptians) the opportunity.

Organizers of the Kampala summit had planned that after lunch, a panel of experts would be selected to make various presentations on how all the Nile Basin countries can harness development in the catchment area.

But mid-way through the announcements, two Egyptians officials (male and female) stood up in protest saying the organizers' aim was to sideline their country by stopping them from presenting.

"They have chosen four Ethiopians to speak and they haven't given us a chance to present. Why have they refused us from speaking?" protested one of the unidentified Egyptian male official who was later joined by his colleagues in protest. Adding: "This is really unfair to us and our country and we won't allow it. They are making Egypt look bad."

Officials from participating countries like those from Sudan tried to calm the situation but their Egyptian counterparts couldn't have anymore of the "insults" and vowed not to go back to the summit.

According to an insider, Egypt only tried to politicize the issue because the summit wasn't political at all as it's intentions were not to discuss the contentious articles in the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA).

Under the CFA, all countries want to have equal shares to the Nile waters but Egypt maintains that the colonial agreements give it more power. It hasn't ratified the CFA and maintains that all countries in the catchment should first seek permission from it before they set up any project on the Nile. The other countries object this.

"The Egyptians and Ethiopians act this way every time we have discussions pertaining the Nile and it's these issues that are slowing us down.

The Ethiopian presenters were only chosen to sit on the panel of experts to discuss how we can promote development in the Nile Basin. They were not even going to talk about their issues with Egypt," said an official who preferred anonymity.

In 2011, Ethiopia embarked on a project to construct the Grand Renaissance Dam on the Nile, the largest power plant in Africa, but ever since then it has come under intense attack from Egypt.

The predominantly Arab country argues that its 94 million people depend on the river for water and construction of the \$4.2bn dam will disrupt the flow of the Nile River and sees it as a national water security threat.

The colonial treaties signed between Egypt and Britain in 1929 and 1959 give the Arab Country close to 90 per cent rights to the Nile waters.

Recent calls for studies to find out the potential effects of the Renaissance Dam have yielded no results as Sudan, Ethiopia and Egypt have failed to agree on which consultancy firm should do the job.

Speaking at the two-day summit, Prof Muawia Shaddad, the incoming NBDS chairperson, observed that the Nile Basin was faced with a lot of challenges.

He noted that problems like climate change, population outburst, poverty would be sorted if Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) under NBDF were involved in the activities of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI).

Shaddad explained that now that the Nile Council of Ministers(Nile-COM) had approved NBI's strategic 10-year plan, the CSOs would work together with the initiative to address a number of bottlenecks.

At the same event, a three-year memorandum of understanding was signed between NBDS and NBI aimed at achieving the latter's strategic plan.

03/12/2017 online at: <http://observer.ug/news/headlines/56275-egypt-walks-out-of-nile-basin-discourse-summit.html>

### **Libya pressing group to restore water supply to capital**

Libyan authorities are attempting to negotiate with a group that has cut water supplies to the Libyan capital for the second time in two months to press for the release of a jailed ally, an official said on Tuesday.

The group shut down pipes pumping water to Tripoli and other coastal towns at the al-Hasawna well system south of the capital, said Tawfiq Shwehaidi, a manager at the Great Man Made River in the eastern city of Benghazi.

“Today is the fifth day in a row that the water has stopped and we are trying to negotiate with them,” he said.

The group, loyal to late former leader Muammar Gaddafi, is demanding the release of Mabrouk Ehnaish, a militia leader detained last month by Tripoli's Special Deterrence Force (SDF), which is aligned with Libya's U.N.-backed government.

Ehnaish's backers have made various threats to sabotage infrastructure including oil and gas supplies, and in October blocked water supplies to the capital for about two weeks.

The Great Man Made River is a pipeline system built under Gaddafi that pumps water to coastal areas from underneath the country's southern desert.

The water cuts come as Libyans struggle to cope with a steep decline in living standards during the conflict that developed after Gaddafi's 2011 overthrow, and an economic crisis that has led to rapid inflation and severe cash shortages.

In recent days there have also been long queues for fuel and cooking gas in Tripoli. Though distributors have denied any shortages, some residents nervous about disruption to supplies have queued for more than an hour to fill vehicles or jerry cans.

28/11/2017 online at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security-tripoli/libya-pressing-group-to-restore-water-supply-to-capital-idUSKBN1DS1RB>

### **Tribal leaders persuade armed group to restore Libya's water supply system**

Tribal leaders in southern Libya have persuaded an armed group to restore Libya's water supply a week after the group stopped it in order to pressure the authorities to release its detained leader, a local official said Thursday.

"A number of tribal elders and leaders of southern Libya managed to persuade the gunmen, who demand the release of a detained leader from a prison in Tripoli, to restore water supply after nearly a week of closure," a member of the municipality council of the southern Shwerif town told Xinhua.

"The elders told the armed group that western cities, including the capital Tripoli, are in total paralysis because of the lack of water supply, and that the fate of more than 2 million people is threatened by this unacceptable closure," the member said on condition of anonymity.

Last week, the armed group threatened to destroy Libya's water supply system unless one of its leaders detained in the capital Tripoli is released.

The group cut the water supply of the country earlier in October, demanding the release of Mabrouk Ehresh, who was captured by Tripoli's Special Anti-Terrorism Force for his involvement in a plot to take over the city.

Libya has been suffering from political division and unrest following the uprising of 2011 that toppled former leader Muammar Gaddafi's regime.

01/12/2017 online at: [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-12/01/c\\_136791460.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-12/01/c_136791460.htm)

### **Morocco to Implement Its Water Strategy throughout Africa**

Through initiatives in banking, transportation, telecommunication, and trade, Morocco's return to the African Union is actively advancing the Union's vision of becoming a leading body.

Morocco's latest successful contribution is the adoption of its "Water for Africa" initiative in the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) in Nigeria on November 27 and 28.

Home to the second driest place in the world – Wadi Halfa, Sudan – and being itself the second driest continent in the world, where the third of the inhabitants lack access to safe drinking water, Africa has an urgent need of an action plan that would solve endemic water scarcity.

AMCOW is among the organisms that seek to preserve the continent's water resources and improve its water supply services.

The council's executive committee the meeting held in Abuja, Nigeria to present its 10-year new strategy, dubbed "Towards water security and safe sanitation in Africa."

In front of participants from governments, regional institutions, international partners, the private sector, the scientific community, civil society, and media from all over the world, Charafat Afilal, Secretary of State in charge of Water, seized the chance and introduced Morocco's "Water of Africa" initiative.

Launched by Morocco in 2016 during the COP22 climate change conference in Marrakech, the initiative aims "to encourage and mobilize political, financial, and institutional actors to design and implement a priority action plan for water security of the African continent."

"Water for Africa" also seeks to improve the living conditions of African populations by strengthening their resilience to the effects of climate change.

The impact of climate change on water resources of the African continent and the promotion of climate justice through initiatives and programs to improve access to water and sanitation and assure food and energy security in Africa is also among the objectives of the plan.

"Because of the significant impact of climate change on water resources, the vulnerability of the Africa is evident. This situation directly affects the development and stability of the continent's populations and threatens their lives," said Afilal, urging for concrete action to diminish the effects of the phenomenon.

Afilal urged all of the participants of the AMCOW Executive Board to adopt the "Water for Africa" initiative and to take on the challenge through innovative, creative, and sustainable solutions.

The AMCOW Executive Board responded by adopting the Moroccan initiative and integrating it into its work agenda.

30/11/2017 online at: <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2017/11/235251/morocco-water-strategy-africa/>