

**Security Threats, Challenges, Vulnerabilities and Risks
The First Global International Studies Conference
Bilgi University, Istanbul, Turkey, 24- 27 August 2005**

Panel 7: Environmental Security Challenges, Vulnerabilities and Risks in the Near East

**Paper 23: Water scarcity and degradation in Palestine as challenges, vulnerabilities
and risks for environmental security**

Marwad Haddad, An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine

Abstract

Paper 23: Water scarcity and degradation in Palestine as challenges, vulnerabilities and risks for environmental security

Marwad Haddad, An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine

Palestine is a militarily occupied country by the Israeli army. The interaction between available water supply and environmental degradation in Palestine is heavily influenced by the prolonged Israeli military occupation in addition to all factors and problems that normally influence the water in other areas in the world.

In Palestine, access of Palestinians to fresh water for domestic, agricultural, industrial, and tourism and other uses is very limited and constricted. There are many reasons behind this water unavailability but mainly limited water recharge rates from precipitation accompanied by artificial-enforced and natural population increase.

Israeli government and despite of the peace process since 1992 and the signing of the Declaration of Principles (DOP) between Israel and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Israel is continuing-bringing waves of Jewish immigrants from all over the world to Israel and Palestine, colonizing over Palestinian land for settling them and exploiting and using Palestinian water resources for their socio-economic development. On the other hand, the same government and through military force, restricted access and availability of water to Palestinians and limited their mobility to their lands forcing them migrate.

Israel decided in April 2002 to establish unilaterally a permanent barrier diverting from internationally acknowledged armistice lines between the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel. The construction of the wall subjected Palestinians to several water vulnerabilities, including irrigation infrastructure devastation, impeded access and mobility to water and irrigation land resources, increased land aridity, and detrimental effects on community socio-economic and migration.

This paper would conclude that the present and growing gap between water supply and demand in Palestine lead to unsustainable water use which in turn holds considerable potential for internal political, economic, and social instability and consequently will increase environmental vulnerability, destabilize livelihoods, increase poverty, and reduce socio-economic development.