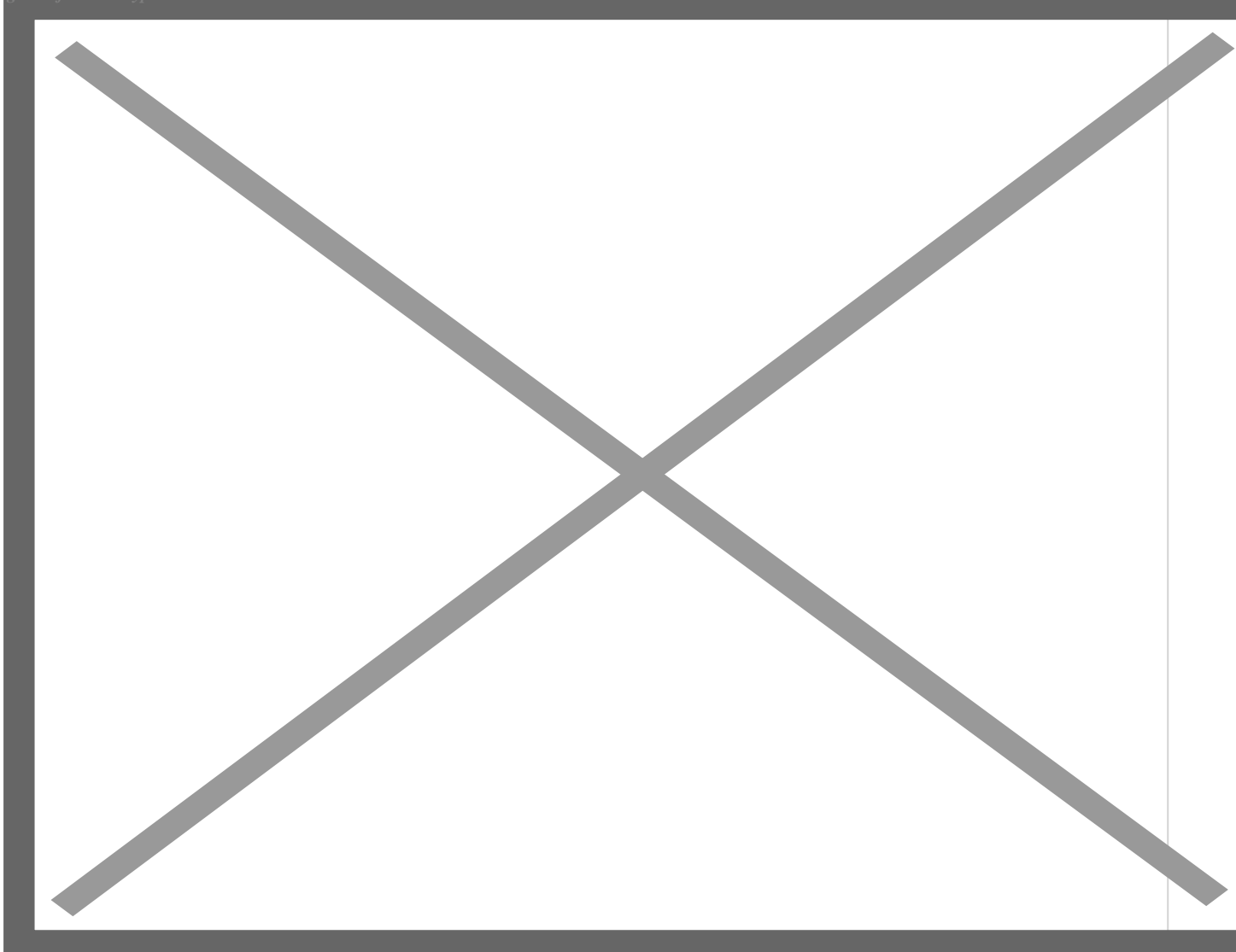


Only four percent of Gaza households have access to safe water

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Palestinian girl drinks water in Gaza Strip?

Gaza City, March 22 (RHC)-- A new study shows that Israel has vastly restricted access of Palestinians in Gaza to water resources, saying that only four percent of households in Gaza have access to safe water.

The study, released by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) and the Palestinian Water Authority, says Israel has denied Gazans' access to safe water as it controls the water of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea. The report also pointed to water pollution and unsafe pumping in the blockade territory, which jeopardizes the sustainability of water resource.

The report said more than 97% of the water pumped from the coastal aquifer in the Gaza Strip does not meet the water quality standards of the World Health Organization, leading to the depletion of groundwater reserves. Palestinian officials warned that the groundwater level in its coastal aquifer had reached 19 meters below sea level.

The report also said the daily allocation per capita from consumed water for Palestinians in Gaza is less than the internationally recommended rate and it is decreasing rapidly.

Palestinian cities have now been forced to purchase water from the Israeli water company 'Mekorot' as the water scarcity Israeli restrictions on access to resources continues, the report noted

The Israeli occupation forces shut off Palestinians access to water from the Jordan River after the area was seized during the 1967 war against Arabs. In the 1967 war, Israel occupied the West Bank, East al-Quds Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, but withdrew from the coastal enclave and laid siege to it in 2007.

Ever since the occupation, Tel Aviv has been enforcing restrictions on the amount of water supplied to the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

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