



PRESS RELEASE

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“IF GAZA IS STILL WITHOUT WATER, IT’S ALSO THE FAULT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION”

NEW THINK-TANK SINE QUA NON DENOUNCES CONTRADICTIONS OF EU ACTION IN GAZA

The “water crisis” in Gaza has become unbearable. Only 10% of the families have access to drinking water and 96% of the available water in the Strip is contaminated. The lives of nearly two million inhabitants are put in danger by the gravely inadequate hygienic conditions. For a long while, the European Union sought to find a solution to this situation with a large-scale development aid plan, which proved to be a failure.

Camille Abescat, researcher at CERI, is the director of publications for Sine Qua Non (sinequanon-eu.com), a think tank recently launched by a handful of young Europeans aiming to reveal the inconsistencies of EU action in the Middle East. Abescat explains that the water crisis, which started in the 1990s, is intrinsically tied to another issue: that of energy shortage.

“The infrastructure for water treatment in Gaza is scarce, because the Israeli military intervention of 2014 destroyed a large part of it and, currently, Tel Aviv prohibits the entry into Gaza of 70% of the raw materials needed for reconstruction”, explains Abescat. Nevertheless, **“what makes the situation not only dramatic, but almost paradoxical, she continues, is the fact that the European Union has financed an infrastructure plan which was made ineffective by the lack of electricity”**.

The EU is sponsoring the largest functioning power plant, operational up to 15% of its capacity because of dependence to Israeli energy sources and funds allocated by the Palestinian Authority. The newest –and the most important– power plant currently under construction thanks to additional European funding seems to be destined for the same future. As a matter of fact, Tel Aviv and the PA regularly punish Gaza by cutting provisions in order to weaken their common enemy: the Hamas party that controls the Strip.

What else could the European Union do? **“Just across Gaza, there is a deposit of natural gas (called “Gaza Marine”) that has almost never been touched.** Although modest, it would be enough to guarantee energy for all Palestinian territories for 25 years. But Israel prevents any exploitation since its discovery in the early 2000s. Rather than funding projects that, to date, are useless, the EU could put pressure on Israel and the PA so that a solution in the long term is finally found.”

Gaza’s contaminated and untreated water is flowing daily into the Mediterranean Sea. This, according to a report from Tel Aviv University, creates a very serious environmental problem that also impacts the Egyptian and Israeli coasts. The water crisis, as of now, can no longer be ignored.

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