Concept note

WASH focused on humanitarian assistance for the Gaza Strip

Introduction

This concept note is a part of *"Advancing Climate Resilience: Area C Solar Power for Gaza and West Bank and Regional Water Security"* - a Joint project of the European **European Commission's Foreign Policy Instruments** and **EcoPeace Middle East.** EcoPeace Middle East is a unique organization that brings together Jordanian, Palestinian, and Israeli environmentalists aiming to advance both sustainable regional development and the creation of necessary conditions for lasting peace in our region. EcoPeace has offices in Amman, Ramallah, and Tel Aviv, and its 30 years of work in Environmental Peacebuilding has been rewarded with a Nobel Peace Prize nomination in 2024.

This project's objective is to achieve increased regional cooperation and agreement on joint action on climate, energy, and human security, through the creation of (1) increased awareness and political will of key national and international decision makers on water security as central to national and regional security; and (2) evidence base for implementation of rapid response measures to build climate resilience for Palestinians.

This concept note will focus on immediate WASH focused humanitarian assistance for the Gaza Strip in the context of the ceasefire that entered into effect on 10 October 2025, aiming to promote immediate humanitarian assistance helping prevent public health, economic, and environmental catastrophes for all parties involved. It's framed as an emergency response (0-6 months) intervention that supports and enables early recovery (6-12 months), in alignment with the palestinian Water Authority's Emergency and Recovery Framework (2023–2030), The Government of Palestine's Gaza Recovery and Reconstruction Implementation Program and The WHO 60-day ceasefire plan and 2025 Operational Response and Early Recovery Plan for the occupied Palestinian territory, which place WASH and health facility functionality at the centre of life-saving and early recovery efforts.

Situation Overview

The Gaza Strip is experiencing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, marked by massive displacement, the near collapse of essential services, a severe health emergency, and escalating regional risks. Approximately 1.9 million Palestinians,

nearly 90% of Gaza's pre-conflict population, have been displaced since October 2023. Many have been forced to move multiple times, often seeking shelter in areas already overwhelmed by previous waves of displaced people. The majority reside in overcrowded shelters, including schools and informal camps, with extremely limited access to basic services[1].

The Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) sector has been particularly devastated. Around 81% of public WASH facilities and assets are either located in conflict-affected zones or have been inaccessible due to military displacement orders. This has severely restricted access to essential water and sanitation services. Household water insecurity is widespread, with approximately 96% of families reporting insufficient or unsafe water supplies, and 90% noting worsening drinking water conditions. The destruction of water infrastructure, contamination of sources, and fuel shortages have forced many to rely on unsafe water, significantly increasing the risk of waterborne diseases.

Sanitation systems have similarly collapsed. Wastewater and solid waste collection are severely disrupted, leading to environmental contamination and heightened exposure to disease. The lack of functional sanitation facilities has contributed directly to outbreaks of diarrhea, jaundice, and other infectious diseases.

The health crisis in Gaza remains acute. As of October 2025, WHO reports that although 400,000 people have been reached through 195 health points, the health system is operating at a fraction of its capacity, with only 14 of 36 hospitals and 109 of 359 medical points still functional. The impact on children is particularly grave, with 11,195 identified as acutely malnourished representing 12% of those screened. Communicable diseases are surging, with more than 586,000 recorded cases of respiratory infections and an additional 220,000 cases of diarrhea. These conditions are compounded by ongoing cross-border risks, including environmental contamination and the heightened potential for disease transmission[2].

The humanitarian crisis also carries significant regional risks. The collapse of sanitation and waste management infrastructure has led to environmental contamination, threatening coastal ecosystems and food security. Large-scale

[1] https://www.ochaopt.org/content/reported-impact-snapshot-gaza-strip-20-august-2025

[2] WHO 2025:WHO (2025) 60-Day Ceasefire Plan
https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/documents/emergencies/who-60-day-ceasefire-plan-for-gaza.pdf?sfvrsn=7fcb8080_5&download=true
WHO (2025) Operational Response & Early Recovery Plan

population displacement and the spread of infectious diseases increase the potential for cross-border transmission to neighboring countries, including Israel and Egypt.

Overall, Gaza's situation is critical. Immediate and sustained international support is essential to address urgent humanitarian needs, prevent further deterioration, and mitigate potential regional spillovers.

The current situation of the WASH sector in the Gaza Strip

According to the World Bank October 2025 Gaza Damage Assessment over 84% of all WASH assets and facilities are damaged or destroyed. All stormwater pumping stations, wastewater treatment plants, water supply connections, and water reservoirs, as well as more than 93% of sewage pumping stations, have been impacted. 81 assets incurred damage during this reporting period, including 27 water wells, 19 sewage pumping stations, 13 water reservoirs, 12 brackish desalination plants, 8 stormwater basins, and 2 stormwater pumping stations. Governorates that sustained the most significant increases in damage include Khan Younis (32 assets) and North Gaza (22 assets), followed by Rafah (11 assets) and Gaza City (11 assets). The damage includes 1550 kilometers of water connection loss. Since then, the water and sewage systems in the Gaza Strip have suffered severe damage.

As of early May 2025, the overall average daily water production in the Gaza Strip from various resources was around 300,000 cubic meters per day. It should be noted the production doesn't represent the amount of water reaching households and population centers, as the transmission system suffers from high percent of water losses (estimated to be almost varies from 70 - 50%) and the fact that many civilians do not reside close to pots and rely on transmission through water trucks, limiting the received amount of water available for each individual.[3]

The Montar Mekorot water connection point in the north of Gaza which has experienced periods of closure and operation had a pre-war daily capacity of 20,000 cubic meters. The Bani Suhaila connection point was repaired after a long period of low supply, with a pre-war capacity of almost 15,000 cubic meters per day)[4]. The remaining BenSa'eed water connection point in the middle area had been damaged and nonfunctional since 22 January 2025 and has a capacity potential for 15,000 cubic meters per day. Yet the updated assessments after the ceasefire indicate that

[3] All data as of early May 2025 was published within the National SoP WASH Cluster Meeting Minutes of May 7, 2025: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CtnSLdotmnDPTkFwB1_e-kbC4jV7OK4d/view?usp=sharing
[4] How Israel worked to renew Gaza's water supply amid the war, with help from locals: 5 june 2024: https://www.timesofisrael.com/how-israel-worked-to-renew-gazas-water-supply-amid-the-war-with-help-from-locals/

the three Mekorot pipelines lines are operational but don't fully cover the needs of Gaza Strip[5].

The Gaza City desalination plant (located in the northern part of Gaza city with pre-war daily water production capacity of 10000 cubic meters is damaged and not operational. Two other desalination plants are still partially operating. Deir al-Balah's desalination plant is partially operational, primarily powered by diesel generators, with a daily average production of 1,100 cubic meters (compared to 6,000 cubic meters per day before the war). The southern desalination facility near Khan Younis, which had been reconnected to the Israel Electricity Corporation (IEC) grid in November 2024 but later disconnected following the collapse of the ceasefire, saw its production drop from more than 8,000 cubic meters per day to just 2,000 cubic meters per day (compared to a pre-war capacity of 20,000 cubic meters). On 27 July 2025, the plant was re-electrified by the IEC and has since resumed operations at a significantly higher output of 16,000 cubic meters per day. According to updated OCHA/UNICEF/WHO reporting (28 September – 14 October 2025), there are now 8 functioning desalination plants in Gaza City and 6 fully operational in the south, supported by the ongoing UNICEF-led subsidized water scheme.In addition to the newly operational desalination capacity, Gaza's water supply system currently relies on multiple interconnected sources. As of late October 2025, three Mekorot water lines are operational, supplying critical volumes into Gaza's northern and central systems. According to the PWA and CMWU Water Supply Update (24–30 October 2025), daily production and supply levels include 24,814.44 m^3/day of desalinated water, 36,580.71 m^3/day from Mekorot, and 59,423.14 m^3/day from groundwater wells. However, Gaza's severely degraded distribution network continues to undermine system efficiency. Water losses range between 50–80%, varying by locality and directly limiting household-level access even when production volumes increase. Moreover, the private and informal sectors remain essential actors in water trucking, small-scale desalination, and neighborhood-level distribution, thereby filling critical gaps left by damaged or non-existent public infrastructure. It is also important to note that the piped water network does not cover the entire Gaza Strip. Areas such as Al Mawasi have only partial and highly limited network coverage, leaving many residents dependent on trucking or informal vendors for their daily water needs[6]

In response to the acute water crisis in Gaza, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) established six desalination plants on the Egyptian side of Rafah, as part of its *Gallant Knight* humanitarian operation. These facilities have collectively produced

[5] Wash Cluster 2025: 20251105 WASH Cluster _ Donors Briefing.pdf
[6] Wash Cluster 2025: 20251105 WASH Cluster _ Donors Briefing.pdf

between 1.2 and 2 million gallons of water per day, benefiting approximately 600,000 Palestinians[7]. By mid-2024, the UAE had already delivered more than 130 million gallons of clean water to Gaza through these plants. In May 2024, when Israel seized full control of the Philadelphi Corridor, humanitarian operations through Rafah were severely disrupted, and the delivery of desalinated water from the Egyptian side was largely halted[89]. By August 2025, 47 truckloads of piping were nevertheless allowed into Gaza to support the UAE-backed water trunkline from Egypt to southern Gaza, which is now expanding distribution with new branch lines into Al Mawasi and Khan Younis.

Groundwater wells production, based on fuel supply and in need for treating and desalination equipment due to high salinity, dropped significantly compared to the beginning of the war. As of early May 2025, UNRWA, municipal, and private sectors operated wells that pump approximately 68,783 cubic meters per day (29,500 cubic meters per day north of Wadi Gaza and 39,284 south of it). Shelters in Rafah started receiving potable water through tankers from the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU) as well. However, updated reporting confirms that most wells remain critically dependent on fuel, antiscalant, and filters for continued operation, and in the latest WASH Cluster report they confirmed that 96 wells are operational [10].

All elements of the WASH system, including plants, pumps, wells, and other WASH facilities that demand consistent electricity, are almost entirely unavailable since the grid is shut down (with the exception of the Southern desalination plant). Thus, the WASH sector is in crucial need of fuel entering the Strip to operate its generators.

On the field of winterization and flood prevention, on November 16th 2024, the Municipality of Khan Younis reported that the lack of fuel is severely hindering its ability to collect and transport waste as well as clear stormwater trains in over 60 identified locations at high risk of flooding, among other essential services, further exacerbating the challenges faced by residents in these vulnerable areas.[11] Current assessments further highlight that the Sheikh Radwan pond is critically full and at

[7] https://una-oic.org/en/palestinians/2025/07/30/The-UAE-brings-hope-to-the-Gaza-Strip-and-breaks-the-siege./
[8] https://apnews.com/article/israel-iran-hamas-latest-05-29-2024-c5f48e99dd5b7704df7c9b37ba6d16c2
[9] https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/israel-captures-all-points-of-aid-access-to-gaza-after-seizing-philadelphi-corridor/3237096
[10] UNRWA 2025: https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-situation-report-194-situation-gaza-strip-and-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem
[11] Humanitarian Situation Update #239 | Gaza Strip, https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-239-gaza-strip

imminent risk of overflow due to stormwater tunnel collapse, requiring emergency structural repairs.[12]

As of the end of August 2025, water resilience in southern and central Gaza has relatively improved. This is due to the several sources of water intermittently available, including two Mekorot pipes from Israel, ground water, and two desalination plants connected to the Israeli electricity grid. In addition in this last month 47 truck loads of piping were allowed into Gaza to lay the new water pipeline to southern Gaza from Egypt, supported by the UAE, and importing desalinated water from Egypt. These various water supply sources are allowing the CMWU to better supply the population with much needed water in south and central Gaza.

In contrast, the situation in north Gaza, is one of dire dependency. With the northern desalination plant destroyed, the only source of large quantities of water for the over one million people in the north is the northern Mekorot pipeline from Israel. Every time this pipeline gets damaged, which is often, then the population is left dependent on small privately owned desalination of ground water, dependent on fuel for their operations, that can produce no more than 2 to 3 thousand liters of water per day. This situation leaves the elderly, sick and young highly vulnerable, with some of the population receiving less than two liters of water a day, until the Mekorot line is repaired. There is therefore an urgent need to focus on rebuilding the water supply resilience of northern Gaza as detailed below. The north therefore requires urgent reconstruction to diversify and stabilize water sources, consistent with CMWU's request.

In summary, the situation demands immediate and sustained efforts to restore essential WASH services, mitigate public health risks, and provide life-saving support to the affected populations.[13]

Immediate Humanitarian needs and interventions

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza had reached catastrophic levels in the last months before the ceasefire, with the collapse of essential water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services. As of October 2025, 93% of households in Gaza experienced water insecurity, The WASH Cluster notes an 11.5% increase, marking a substantial improvement from earlier months, especially in the period immediately after the ceasefire. This dire situation is compounded by the destruction of over 85% of WASH infrastructure, including desalination plants, sewage treatment facilities, and water

[12] Wash cluster 2025
[13] Flash Appeal Occupied Palestinian Territory: https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/OPT_Flash_Appeal_EN_Rev_2.pdf

wells[14]. The ongoing fuel shortage, which has persisted since March 2025 remains unresolved; UNOPS delivered 1.19 million liters of diesel in early October 2025, but this amount remains insufficient; to keep critical systems functional. This has led to the shutdown of essential services such as hospitals, water pumping stations, and wastewater facilities.

The lack of access to clean water has resulted in a public health emergency, with rising cases of waterborne diseases such as diarrhea and Hepatitis A and E. Children under five are particularly vulnerable, with over 320,000 at risk of acute malnutrition. The situation is further aggravated by the accumulation of untreated sewage in residential areas, and pending repair of major sewage lines such as the Samar line, all of which increase the risk of widespread disease outbreaks. At least 57 newly established temporary learning spaces currently lack WASH facilities, and an additional 150 schools have closed due to the unavailability of materials needed for safe operation, further compounding protection, health, and education risks[15].

A key priority is to rebuild water resilience in northern Gaza. This can be achieved by enabling the import of more than 20 small desalination units, clustered in a way that allows future connection to the Israeli electricity grid. However, no formal request for their entry has yet been submitted. In addition, duplicating the efforts of the UAE in the south, the rapid building of a new pipeline from either Zikim or Erez, connected to mekorot pipes in the north, could supply relatively large water quantities along the Gaza coast directly to the population centers in Gaza city. This combination of several water resources would build the needed resilience for the north of Gaza, as exists in the south and center.

In this context, immediate intervention is critical to prevent further loss of life and to stabilize the humanitarian situation. This includes restoring access to clean water, ensuring proper sanitation, and providing essential hygiene services. Critical interventions now required include: the import of more than 20 small desalination units (as formally requested by CMWU, UNICEF, and UNDP), securing repaired and protected power supply for all WASH facilities, restoring full water trucking capacity, guaranteeing fuel supplies for hospitals and desalination plants, and winterizing WASH sites ahead of the flooding season. The interventions outlined above are fully aligned with the WASH Cluster Ceasefire Plan (October 2025), ensuring preparedness for rapid implementation during any stabilization or ceasefire period.

14 https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data_Product/Main_media/20250117_ACAPS_Briefing_note_Palestine_Gaza_ceasefire.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

15 UNRWA Situation Report #182 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem

Possible Scalable Pilot Projects

In response to the urgent needs, several scalable pilot projects have been proposed to address the immediate humanitarian crisis while laying the groundwork for long-term resilience.

Small Local Wells: Establishing wells producing 70–120 cubic meters per day can serve displaced clusters. A pilot project in Deir al-Balah has successfully established a new public water well, supplying an additional 60 cubic meters per hour to approximately 16,000 people . Scaling this model could involve creating a network of over 200 community wells across Gaza and the West Bank, integrated with municipal water grids[16].OCHA confirms new wells are functional in Deir al-Balah and Khan Younis, supplying shelters. All proposed interventions are coordinated with the PWA Emergency and Recovery Framework (2023–2030) and the Gaza WASH Ceasefire Response Plan (October 2025) to ensure coherence between emergency actions and medium-term recovery programming[17].

Mobile Desalination Units: Deploying solar-powered desalination units capable of producing 50–120 cubic meters per day can provide emergency potable water. A pilot initiative has demonstrated the feasibility of such units, and scaling this model could involve the deployment of over 100 renewable-powered desalination systems, forming a decentralized backup water supply .WHO and UNICEF confirm urgent need for mobile RO units, especially in the north.

Water Trucking: Utilizing a fleet of trucks, each delivering 5–10 cubic meters, can address immediate water needs during crises. Establishing a permanent emergency water fleet, linked to logistics hubs and desalination plants, would ensure sustained water delivery during emergencies. 35+ partners are trucking water; the 250 trucks/day aid target requires coordinated dispatch, security arrangements, and prioritization for the north, moreover Eccopeace has ensured to repair 25 trucks for water trucking.[18]

Drinking Water Containers: Distributing units (10 liters each) in shelters can provide immediate relief. Scaling this model involves creating a nationwide household-level

[16] https://www.ochaopt.org/content/gaza-humanitarian-response-update-20-july-2-august-2025?utm_source=chatgpt.com

[17] https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gaza-humanitarian-response-update-28-september-11-october-2025

[18] See post by CMWU: https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1270607308444031&id=100064843204278&rdid=SJYOjlTusFJpYV6j#

emergency water storage program, including containers and a refill network, to ensure access to clean water during crises. Needed to support returnees to northern Gaza, as confirmed by OCHA, due to extremely limited per-capita water availability.

Mobile Toilets: Deploying units in displacement camps can address immediate sanitation needs. Expanding this to 10,000 mobile sanitation units with rapid deployment capacity across conflict zones would significantly improve sanitation conditions. Particularly urgent where overcrowded shelters lack sanitation, and 150+ Child-Friendly Spaces remain closed due to lack of materials.

Hygiene & Disinfection Kits: Providing hygiene kits for shelters can mitigate health risks. Institutionalizing a hygiene supply system with pre-positioned stockpiles for over 1 million people would ensure preparedness for future crises. See also specific gender-related considerations and proposals below.

Build Water Resilience in North Gaza: Importing sufficient numbers of smaller desalination plants to north Gaza that can be clustered together, connected to a repaired electricity line from Israel, and produce larger quantities of water. Lay a new pipeline along the Gaza coast connecting Northern Gaza and Gaza city with mekorot water pipes, in the Zikim and Erez area in Israel. Such a combination of actions will rebuild the needed water resilience for the one million people in north Gaza. These scalable models not only address immediate needs but also contribute to building long-term resilience in Gaza's WASH sector.

Decentralized Wastewater Units: Deploying prefabricated, containerized wastewater treatment modules to serve high-density shelters and urban clusters. These units will provide safe sludge and effluent management and are aligned with ceasefire preparedness priorities. Planning the mobilization of decentralized wastewater treatment units will be carried out under the technical supervision of PWA and CMWU, consistent with the Early Recovery Plan framework. Prepositioning of strategic materials to support these units including pumps, membranes, and spare parts will follow the guidance in the Gaza Ceasefire Plan, emphasizing stockpiling within secured CMWU warehouses.

Energy for WASH

To ensure continuous WASH service provision, energy access must be prioritized. While re-operating the electricity grid connection to the Israel Electric Corporation (IEC) remains the most effective long-term solution, interim measures are needed to meet urgent needs. As of October 2025, the southern desalination plant has resumed operations at 16,000 m^3/day following IEC re-connection, while electricity

remains unavailable grid-wide for all other WASH sites. UNOPS delivered 1,053,870 liters of diesel in early October, but overall fuel demand for WASH exceeds supply by approximately 70%.[19][20] Building on the precedent of reconnecting the southern seawater desalination plant to the IEC (expanding capacity to over 15,000 m^3/day), EcoPeace advocates for coordinated efforts to secure:

- The entry of solar panels, fuel, and gas generators as portable, off-grid energy sources for WASH facilities, noting that solar panels and generators continue to face entry restrictions.
- A mechanism of protection and monitoring that ensures solar panels provided for WASH are not diverted for other uses, as has been reported in hospitals. EcoPeace suggests that the Arab International Organization for Construction in Palestine (AIOCP) could serve as guarantor, ensuring panels remain dedicated to WASH infrastructure.
- Supplying the main facilities with a permanent power line, similar to the one connected at the Southern Gaza Desalination Plant

This arrangement would differ from prior failed attempts at equipment entry, as it would be coordinated through COGAT with oversight mechanisms, increasing the likelihood of approval and successful implementation.

Storage & Logistics

Instead of establishing new sites in insecure zones, EcoPeace advocates for strengthening the protection and coordinated usage of CMWU's existing warehouses, with prior coordination through COGAT to allow entry and controlled use of sensitive WASH-related equipment. This aligns with the Gaza Ceasefire Plan's guidance on prepositioning strategic WASH materials inside secured CMWU warehouses.

Recent logistics updates show the urgency of this approach: 578 pallets were collected between 28 September and 11 October; 47 trucks entered via Jordan's B2B mechanism (limited to health and shelter items); and aid to the north has been

[19] https://content.unops.org/documents/libraries/press-releases/2025/en/Press-release-UNOPS-delivers-millions-of-litres-of-fuel-for-critical-humanitarian-needs.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

[20] https://www.un.org/unispal/document/ocha-sitrep-8-29oct25/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

halted entirely since the closure of Zikim.[21] Severe losses due to looting and insecurity further highlight the need for protected WASH-dedicated storage.

This approach draws on the success demonstrated in earlier coordinated interventions and can serve as a scalable model for ensuring both sides accept the mechanism.

Gender Sensitivity Considerations

As women and girls demand dignified and suitable access to hygiene commodities and services, all WASH related aid planning must address the significant gaps for this group of the population, and ensure that it would be addressed in an appropriate and safe manner for all users, with inclusive access recognizing women's and girls' specific needs. As of October 2025, 27 Women and Girls Safe Spaces are operating including new reopenings in Gaza City and more than 150 GBV cases are receiving cash-for-protection support. However, hygiene gaps remain severe, requiring female-oriented hygiene kits and menstrual health supplies.

EcoPeace's Unique Role in the Gaza WASH Crisis

EcoPeace Middle East is uniquely positioned to help implement and coordinate these interventions. With established relationships with the Palestinian Water Authority, Coastal Municipal Water Utility, Israeli Water Authority, and COGAT, EcoPeace acts as a trusted mediator and facilitator between local technical teams and military authorities, ensuring safe and approved access to critical infrastructure. The organization has successfully demonstrated the feasibility of cross-border technical interventions, including the coordination of portable desalination units and spare parts entry during highly sensitive periods. By leveraging this experience, EcoPeace facilitates the repair and operation of Mekorot pipelines, groundwater wells, and sewage systems, reducing risk to personnel and ensuring operational efficiency.

EcoPeace may also coordinate logistics for the entry, storage, and distribution of emergency WASH equipment. The establishment of protected buffer-zone hubs for storage of water, fuel, mobile toilets, pumps, and repair facilities enables rapid deployment of lifesaving services while minimizing risk to staff and equipment. Beyond operational coordination, EcoPeace advocates for the protection of water

21 https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/gaza-humanitarian-response-update-28-september-11-october-2025?utm_source=chatgpt.com

and sanitation as fundamental human rights. It engages simultaneously with Palestinian and Israeli authorities, as well as the international community, to secure fuel supplies, approvals for dual-use equipment, and support for scalable emergency measures. By linking immediate interventions with longer-term solutions, EcoPeace ensures that lifesaving measures today contribute to sustainable, resilient WASH infrastructure for the future.

In sum, EcoPeace's combination of technical expertise, cross-border access, operational coordination, and advocacy capacity makes it an indispensable partner in preventing a humanitarian disaster in Gaza and in building resilience for future crises.

Advocacy strategy for the international community and for EcoPeace

As the Israeli authorities fully control all flows of aid, an effective advocacy strategy is necessary in order to bring better solutions on the ground when aiming to change the WASH situation in the Gaza Strip. In the specific field of WASH, it was found along the war that the unique impact of the WASH situation in the Gaza Strip on the Israeli interests. As the WASH crisis directly affects matters of public health (spread of epidemics, disease vectors and other kinds of pollution) it knows no borders and puts the lives of Palestinians and Israelis in danger. This dynamic has been further reinforced in 2025, with Israeli institutions repeatedly acknowledging the cross-border public-health spillover risk as a core national-security concern.

Those facts were proven to be effective in changingIsraeli policies regarding WASH-related humanitarian assistance. Soon after the beginning of the war, in November 2023, Israeli National Security Council head Tzachi Hanegbi justified the cabinet's decision to re-allow entry of fuel into Gaza by saying that failing to allow fuel would lead to the mass spread of disease in Gaza, which would impact both Palestinians and Israelis. Another Israeli diplomatic official said that the entry of fuel was aimed *"to enable the minimal maintenance necessary for water, sewer and sanitary systems to prevent pandemics that could spread to the entire area, hurting residents of the Strip as well as our own forces and potentially spreading into Israel as well."*[22] In the 2025 context, this same logic is visible in the U.S. administration's "Trump 20-Point Gaza Plan" (October 2025), which explicitly mandates infrastructure rehabilitation for water, sewage, hospitals, and rubble removal as part of the ceasefire compliance requirements. The plan's emphasis on WASH systems reflects the

[22] In shift, Israel agrees to regularly let fuel into Gaza, drawing outrage in coalition, The Times of Israel, 17 November 2023: https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-shift-israel-agrees-to-regularly-let-fuel-into-gaza-drawing-outrage-in-coalition/

recognition that public-health collapse in Gaza cannot be contained and poses severe risks to Israeli civilian areas.

Utilizing the specific impact of the WASH sector on Israeli interest has proven to be somewhat effective when trying to promote immediate relief and assistance activities within the WASH sector. That language is already used by EcoPeace when working with the relevant Israeli authorities and it might be similarly effective when used by the relevant international actors communicating with the same authorities. EcoPeace will continue to coordinate its advocacy closely with the WASH Cluster, ensuring that field-level coordination, technical prioritization, and high-level diplomatic dialogue are mutually reinforcing. This includes active engagement with both the Humanitarian Operations Room and Civil-Military Operations Rooms that mediate access, clearances, and field-level troubleshooting for WASH materials.

Beyond immediate relief, this advocacy strategy can also support the mediation and coordination of broader WASH-related priorities. It can be used not only when promoting the immediate assistance priorities as described above, but also as a tool when mediating and coordinating other WASH-related priorities, needs and initiatives. In this sense, parallel communications with Israeli authorities, Palestinian authorities and relevant INGOs, such as those supported by the European Union, could be more beneficial and make the EU a more effective actor in solving various challenges and needs in this field. Given that both the New York Declaration (September 2025) and the Trump 20-Point Plan require multi-agency coordination on infrastructure rehabilitation, aligning EU-supported initiatives with these political frameworks can create stronger entry points for negotiation with Israeli counterparts, especially when coordinated through the WASH Cluster and Operations Rooms.

In this way, advocacy that recognizes both humanitarian imperatives and regional security interests can help secure urgent WASH access today while also laying the groundwork for longer-term resilience and cooperation. EcoPeace's approach anchored in WASH Cluster alignment, Operations Room engagement, and leveraging Israel's own stated public-health risk concerns strengthens its ability to advocate for immediate approvals, sustained humanitarian access, and structured pathways for reconstruction.

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