



## GOVERNMENT, POLICY & FINANCE

### 2 Jordanian Prince to Head Regional Water Group

Turkey and three other nations in one of the world's most conflict-prone regions have agreed to form a high-level group to cooperate on managing their increasingly threatened water supplies.

### 3 Arab and Islamic Funders Contribute \$200 Million USD for Gaza Desal Plant

## INFRASTRUCTURE & UTILITIES

### 4 Matrouh Governorate Builds Egypt's Biggest Desal Plant

### 4 Zimbabwe to Start Building Gwayi-Shangani Dam This Month

Work on the long-stalled Gwayi-Shangani Dam will begin in late April, now that the government finally secured funding from China to carry out the massive water project.

### 5 Sinai Region Unveils \$41.1 Million USD Drinking Water Projects

Egypt's North and South Sinai

governorates revealed plans last week to build \$41.1 million USD worth of new drinking water projects to meet increasing demand for water on the semi-arid peninsula.

## ENVIRONMENT, SECURITY & RISK

### 6 Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire More Vulnerable to Climate Effects

A reassessment of climate vulnerability in West Africa warns that Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire are more vulnerable to climate effects such as flooding and sea level rise than previously thought.

### 7 Can Water Progress Be Sustained? WHO, UN-Water Unsure

The 2012 UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS), released April 12 by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UN-Water, praises advances in the provision of water for domestic use, but also raises concerns about whether developing countries have the financing and political will to hang onto those gains.

### 8 African States Urged to

### Entrench Rights to Food and Water

The right to adequate quantities of water and food should be embedded in national legislation and policies to support sustainable development in Africa.

### 8 Zambia's Anti-Corruption Commission Urges Water Sector to Improve Governance

Zambia's Anti-Corruption Commission called on the country's water sector to promote ethical codes of conduct at all utilities as a key part of the fight against corruption.

### 9 Power Producers, Water Authorities Headed for Clash Over Water Use

## 10 LOCAL PRESS REPORTS

From Botswana, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Namibia, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Switzerland, Syria, Tanzania, the United Arab Emirates, Uganda, the United Kingdom, the United States, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

## 16 ABOUT OOSKANEWS

## 17 WATER SECTOR EVENTS

## Jordanian Prince to Head Regional Water Group

**Timothy Spence, OOSKAnews, BRUSSELS, Belgium** -- Turkey and three other nations in one of the world's most conflict-prone regions have agreed to form a high-level group to cooperate on managing their increasingly threatened water supplies.

Representatives of Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey on April 10 announced they are forming the independent group, which will be chaired by Jordan's Prince Hassan bin Talal, the uncle of King Abdullah II.

The decision comes a year after a European-financed report called for an urgent acceleration in regional cooperation, amid warnings that regional water supplies are under stress from human and agricultural demands in the arid region.

"The Blue Peace: Rethinking Middle East Water," produced by the Strategic Foresight Group in Mumbai, India, urged enhanced cooperation over the Jordan, Tigris, Euphrates, Yarmouk and El-Kabir rivers, as well as the Dead Sea and Lake Tiberias, also known as

"With regards to Syria, the decision is to wait and watch and involve the other four countries...at this stage. Hopefully, once the framework for cooperation is prepared, engagement with Syria will be explored."

Kinneret or the Sea of Galilee.

The high-level group could also one day involve Syria, where the government's violent crackdown on dissenters has strained relations with Turkey, which is now accommodating thousands of Syrian refugees.

"With regards to Syria, the decision is to wait and watch and involve the other four countries ... at this stage," Ilmas Futehally, Strategic Foresight's executive director, told OOSKAnews in Brussels.

"Hopefully, once the framework for cooperation is prepared, engagement with Syria will be explored," she said.

The Swiss government, which along with Sweden supported the "Blue Peace" report, is also backing formation of the high-level group in cooperation with the Strategic Foresight think tank.

According to a report by Jordan's state-run Petra news agency, the independent group was formed "to develop a vision for regional cooperation, taking into account and respecting agreements and efforts between governments."

Plagued by drought, internal conflict and trans-boundary competition, the region faces a rapid deterioration in water supply and quality, independent and UN studies show.

For years, authorities in the countries sharing the Euphrates and Tigris -- Turkey, Syria and Iraq -- have engaged in tit-for-tat blame over the waterways' downstream decline. The situation was made worse by



The Tigris and Euphrates basins.

a regional cold war over water cooperation that is only now giving way to warmer relations.

Authorities have welcomed steps taken in the recent years to improve cooperation in the Tigris and Euphrates basins.

One top diplomat who spent years shuttling between the countries trying to encourage a dialogue on water told OOSKAnews that representatives of the three governments would not meet in the same room to discuss water-sharing, despite the mounting evidence that the rivers were under worsening stress.

Several ministerial-level meetings have been held, and there is rising cooperation at a technical level, sparked in part by Turkey's more assertive diplomatic and economic interest in the Arab world.

Downstream Iraq's situation is so severe that the future of the fertile farming region between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers could be in jeopardy.

Only 8 percent of the country's

Article continued on page 3

## Arab and Islamic Funders Contribute \$200 Million USD for Gaza Desal Plant

### OOSKAnews Correspondent, GAZA

-- Arab and Islamic financing institutions will contribute \$200-\$250 million USD to build a desalination plant in the [Gaza Strip](#), according to [Rafik al Husaini](#), water and environment commissioner in the [Union for the Mediterranean](#).

Arab and [European](#) financiers of the project will meet this week to discuss how much each institution will contribute, according to al Husaini.

He said a meeting held during the [World Water Forum](#) in [Marseille](#) last month resulted in a green light for the project, with contributions coming from the [EU](#), Arab and Islamic funds.

[Persian Gulf](#) donors have pledged \$1.6 billion USD toward reconstruction plans in Gaza. Out of this total, around \$200-\$250 million USD will be earmarked for the desalination plant, he added.

[Palestinian](#) water officials also confirmed that European countries would contribute to construction of the plant.

They will decide how much once a feasibility study being prepared by the [European Investment Bank](#) is completed.

According to Palestinian sources, the goal is to split the cost of the plant among European and Arab countries.

The [Water Authority](#) in Gaza recently announced that it is also expecting funds from the European Investment Bank, the United Nations Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) and other international donors.

The [French government](#) last month announced it would contribute \$13.2 million USD for construction of the plant, as a commitment on the part of the Union for the Mediterranean.

With an annual capacity of 100 million cubic meters, the \$450 million USD plant is expected to improve drinking water in the war-torn territory.

Palestinian water officials say this amount of desalinated water will meet local needs and keep people from having to drink contaminated

---

Arab and European financiers of the project will meet this week to discuss how much each institution will contribute.

---

water.

Gaza residents usually wait for winter rainwater to fill wells so that they can meet their needs for the rest of the year. However, the territory has faced a lack of rainfall over the past few years.

More than 95 percent of the population in Gaza lacks access to clean water. Per capita availability is only 80 liters per day, according to the [Palestinian Statistic Bureau](#).

International agencies estimate that groundwater resources in Gaza will no longer be sufficient for the population in the next 10 to 15 years.

### Article continued from 2

freshwater supply is derived domestically, with Turkey being the source for 71 percent, according to the Ministry of Water Resources.

The Tigris and Euphrates, both with origins in Turkey, are the backbone of Iraq's water supply. The Euphrates, which cuts through northeastern Syria and feeds [Lake al-Assad](#), is vital to that country's water supply.

Iraq and Syria have complained that irrigation and dam projects in Turkey have diminished river flows to the downstream countries.

Water stress in Iraq is amplified by massive population shifts sparked by violence, drought and rural economic dislocation, according to 2011 report by the [International Organization for Migration](#) (IOM).

Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war wreaked havoc on infrastructure, and lingering tensions with [Israel](#) have hampered regional resource cooperation.

Meanwhile, Israel's strategic control of the Jordan River and Lake Tiberias has long fuelled animosities with Syria and Jordan.