

Affidavit

I, the undersigned, Maher Najjar, holder of I.D. No _____, having been notified that I must tell the truth and nothing but the truth and that if I do not do so, I will be subject to criminal penalties under the law, hereby declare as follows:

1. My name is Maher Najjar. I am the Deputy Director of the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU). I make this affidavit to update the court on the way in which restrictions in fuel supply and the entrance of spare parts are increasing the vulnerability of the water and sewage system. I also wish to explain the relationship between electricity supply and water supply.
2. Without a supply of electricity, Gaza's residents cannot receive water to their homes. Drinking water is extracted from wells by pump, pumped to treatment stations, pumped to homes and pumped to roof top tanks. Sewage is pumped away and treated using electrically powered process. Already today, people who are living in high buildings suffer from frequent disruptions of water supply to their houses. Further cuts will further harm their ability to receive clean water.
3. Already, the water quality of Gaza is below international standards, and without the ability to pump water to purification plants, we risk falling below even today's poor water quality.
4. Producing power via fuel-powered generators is significantly more expensive than purchasing electricity

Spare parts:

5. The water and sewage systems in the Gaza Strip have become more and more vulnerable, since Israel destroyed the six transformers of the Gaza power plant in June 2006. In the last 16 months, we have relied to a large extent on back up generators. This reliance has accelerated the wearing down of the system and increased the need for spare parts. Due to the closure of Gaza's crossings and the restrictions on the entrance of goods, we are unable to get spare parts into the Gaza Strip. Therefore we are experiencing a severe shortage in many of the spare parts the system requires.

6. Spare parts were procured for projects run under the Gaza Emergency Water Project funded by the World Bank and other donors (Unicef, ICRC, GVC, Care, UNDP, Oxfam). These projects are carried out by local contractors. Some of the spare parts were ordered from Israel, and some were ordered from abroad and are waiting in warehouses for clearance by the military. Our international partners have been trying to get these materials into the Gaza Strip since the closure of Karni Crossing six months ago, with no success.
7. The main items that we are in critical need of are: spare parts for the water and sewage pumps, spare parts for generators, parts for welding machines, wire mesh, steel pipes, spare parts for vehicles, digital meters and chlorination tablets.
8. In addition to the severe shortage in spare parts, cement is not entering Gaza at all. Therefore, we were forced to stop all our development projects, which are vital in order to prevent catastrophes in which people may die, as happened in March 2007, when five people died when a sewage lagoon flooded the Bedouin village Um Nassar. Cement is needed to shore up sewage lagoons, water reservoirs, manhole , new water wells,.....etc
9. The poor maintenance of the sewage system, the shortage of spare parts, the intensive use of generators instead of regular electricity supply, and the fact that all development projects have stopped make the reoccurrence of such a disaster a very realistic scenario which is likely to happen. Currently, another sewage disaster is threatening to happen in Khan Younis, where we lack the materials to make necessary repairs and emergency project.
10. In addition, failure in the operation of wells and sewage pumps occur frequently, and are increasing on a daily basis, due to the poor condition of the water and sewage systems where many of its components have not been replaced for the past six months and are in a very bad shape.
11. Maintaining functioning water and sewage systems depends on the availability of materials, cement, fuel, spare parts etc. We keep struggling to create creative ad hoc solutions to deal with the crisis, rather than using effective, permanent and cheaper solutions, which require materials that are waiting on the Israeli side of the border.

12. With the onset of the winter, we are highly concerned that the system as it is now will not be able to function properly and to deal with the demands and expected breakdowns of the winter. For example, we are already dealing with a problem of the level of the sewage lakes, and with the coming winter; we will have to deal with the rain's effect on the sand embankment. With the coming rain, the system threatens to overflow, forcing sewage back into homes and polluting the aquifer and the wells that supply most drinking water.

Update on the operation of water wells and sewage stations

13. In the last 2-3 weeks, there has been significant increase in failures affecting the regular operation of water wells and sewage stations; due to both fuel shortages and technical failures that can not be fixed because of the lack of spare parts. Each day, on a rotating basis, I have to cut water supply to tens of thousands of people, because I cannot purchase enough fuel to power the generators that pump water. I have the money in my budget to purchase the fuel, but the diesel has not been available in sufficient quantities since October 28.
14. We are still experiencing difficulties in receiving the amount of diesel needed to keep the water and sewage systems running properly. The private fuel supplier from whom we purchase fuel is not able to buy enough diesel, and so we have been receiving less fuel than we need and with delays.
15. I can only obtain fuel from suppliers who purchase it from the Israeli company, Dor Alon. I cannot order fuel via the air, the sea, or the border with Egypt, because of the prohibition on bringing goods into Gaza in these ways, and since June 2007, Israel has not permitted fuel to enter Gaza on trucks, via Karni Crossing.
16. The Rafah area suffers from 2 hours of electricity outages per day and 2 hours of under voltage daily between 7:00-9:00, during peak morning hours. Therefore, the water wells and the sewage stations in Rafah area are dependent on diesel-powered generators for four hours each day.
17. On 22 November, 6 water wells in the Rafah area, serving 100,000 people, ran out of diesel, and therefore, people in this area were not receiving water for 4 hours a

- day. Only on 25 November, I managed to obtain a small quantity of diesel fuel for the six wells, through the local municipality. The diesel supplied is sufficient to operate the wells for 2 days. That means that on 27 November, they will stop working again, if I do not manage to receive an adequate amount of diesel from my supplier.
18. Today, the 26 November, three additional water wells ran out of fuel in the Rafah area, serving around 12,000 people, meaning that during the hours of under-voltage and electricity outages, an additional 12,000 people will have no water supply.
 19. In addition, Tal Al-Sultan sewage station in Rafah area also ran out of fuel today – the 26 November.
 20. We need an immediate supply of 12,000 liters of diesel, in order to be able to serve the people with clean water and to pump the sewage in Rafah area.
 21. On 22 November, two water wells ran out of diesel in Gaza city area and until today I have been unable to purchase the fuel to keep the wells operating. Gaza City area suffers from approximately 4 hours of electricity outages per day and 6 hours of under voltage per day, totaling 10 hours, in which the generators of the water wells should operate on diesel. Till today, I could not supply fuel to those water wells serving 20,000 people, meaning that those people will not receive water for 10 hours per day.
 22. Al-shejaeya water well in Gaza city operates solely on diesel. It should be operating 15 hours a day, and serves a population of 10,000 people. This well will stop working tomorrow the 27th November, unless we get more fuel. In the last 10 days, due to lack of fuel, we had to operate the well 5-6 hours per day out of the 15 hours needed daily.
 23. The 7B sewage station in Gaza City should be working for 24 hours a day, and operates on fuel 10 hours a day due to under voltage and electricity cuts. It now has 40 hours fuel supply that lasts for 4 days. If the sewage station stops working, there is a very real threat that it will overflow, flooding the overpopulated area, including houses, streets, and people..

24. In addition to water wells and sewage stations that are partially or totally not working due to shortages in diesel, five days ago three water wells serving approximately 100,000 people, and three days ago 2 sewage stations in the area of Gaza city stopped operating partially because the generators broke down, and we do not have spare parts to fix them. We cannot find any available spare parts in Gaza Strip, even though the parts we need are waiting on the Israeli side of the border for approval by the military. Therefore, all the mentioned stations are not operating for 10 hours a day when there is no electricity or under voltage.
25. I cannot emphasize enough the risk to health and sanitation caused by the shortage of fuel and spare parts.
26. I declare that this is my name, this is my signature, and that the content of the affidavit, which I have signed, is true.

Signature

Date

I certify that on October 28, 2007, Maher Najjar, holder of ID # _____, appeared before me, and after I put him on notice that he must tell the truth and nothing but the truth and that if he does not do so, he will be subject to criminal penalties under the law, he affirmed the truth of this statement above and signed it in my presence.

Attorney Signature

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