



**Friends of
the Earth
Palestine**



Mekorot in Latin America and Africa

PENGON – FOE Palestine

September 2024

Introduction

Mekorot, Israel's national water company is expanding its international cooperation and work on consulting, planning and aid activities to the Latin America and Africa, while applying an apartheid policy in water management in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, practicing the illegal restriction of access to water, depriving the Palestinian from sufficient water supply and maintaining independent infrastructure, violating World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations, and operating the illegal Israeli settlements.

Mekorot's support has been vital to the establishment of illegal settlements since 1967, when the company gained monopolic control over all water sources in the occupied territories of Palestine, supplying Israeli settlements at the expense of the Palestinian communities. The average Palestinian water consumption per capita is less than the minimum recommended level globally, according to the 100 Litres per day standard of the WHO, the Palestinian average daily allocation is around 84.5 liters of water per day. The daily allocation per capita from consumed water in 2022 is less than the internationally recommended rate, and it is decreasing (PCBS, 2024) compared to 200 liters per day for the average Israeli consumption per day, Mekorot profits from occupation and the water shortages by selling stolen water back to Palestinians at 10 times the prices it charges other Israeli water corporations, despite paying higher rates, Mekorot prioritizes Israeli settlements over the Palestinian communities forcefully dependent on the company's network. Thus Mekorot is complicit in the international crime of natural resource exploitation by operating wells in the West Bank, most of which supply Israeli settlements. Mekorot also works closely with the Israeli military in confiscating irrigation pipes from the West Bank. Adversely affecting Palestinian farmers and the destroying water supply sources for Palestinian communities in a mechanism to drive people away from their land.

Israel has imposed 16 years of blockade on Gaza strip, a side of limiting peoples' movement and entry of essential goods, products and equipment, it prevented the entry of water equipment utilized for water and sewage systems' establishment, maintenance and improvements. And since the beginning of the latest Israeli occupation aggression against Gaza in October 2023, Israel has targeted water infrastructure causing the water system to collapse. Preventing Palestinian in Gaza from access to clean drinkable water, and depriving the essential facilities such as hospitals, and schools used as shelters for the displaced people from the proper sanitation. Palestinian in Gaza is suffering from severe water crises, the access to safe and sustainable water in Gaza is limited and nearly impossible.

Water is being used as a weapon against the Palestinian in West Bank and Gaza Strip, as the Israeli government shut off the pipes that supply Gaza with water. In addition, Israel has targeted the critical infrastructure in Gaza, including water supply systems.

Internationally, Mekorot positions itself as a 'leader in water resources management', its enormous desalination plants and the recycling of effluents. And it feeds the myth of the 'Israeli miracle', for having 'transformed a desert into an oasis', omitting the fact that Palestine had a vast established agricultural system, dating back thousands years, which is being systematically destroyed by ongoing colonisation and continuous dispossession of Palestinian territory and the theft of its main sources of water.

Mekorot operate in several countries in Latin America, Southeast Asia, Africa, Mediterranean Basin and Europe, where it works with governments and various business entities. In Latin America, Mekorot offers consulting services: advice on water management, monitoring, policy planning, project design and training. In general, these services are offered to governments, companies or organizations that need to maintain, expand or deepen extractive projects that demand intensive use of water. Entities of the Zionist lobby of different countries invite government delegations to tour the company's facilities in Israel or to participate in seminars and events that it organizes on water.

Mekorot consider the newest agreements in Argentina, Dominican Republic, Chile, Uruguay as an opportunity to expand the company's operations in Latin America. following widespread activity in the field in 2022 with the signing of engagements in Morocco, India, and Azerbaijan. Whereas Mekorot is already active in Bahrain and the Kingdom of Jordan. Meanwhile in Africa, Israel worked on enhancing ties with African countries since 1950s to enhance its political alliances, beside that it seeks for resource extraction and market creation for Israeli goods and Mekorot is active under MASHAV-The Israel Agency for International Development Cooperation-and within the framework of some projects that include both technical assistance and aid components.

A brief of agreements Mekorot has signed within the last 15 years in Latin America and Africa is discussed within this report.

Mekorot Agreements and Cooperation in Latin America and Africa

Mekorot, Israel's national water company is expanding its international cooperation and work on consulting and planning activities to the Latin America and Africa, it exports around 2 billion US in water technology to global market annually to finance and its apartheid policy in water management in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, with monopolic control over water extraction from the Palestinian land and the illegal restriction of access to water in Palestine, violating WHO recommendations and operating the illegal Israeli settlements.

Besides that, water is being weaponized against the Palestinian in West Bank and Gaza Strip, as the Israeli government shut off the pipes that supply Gaza with water. In addition, Israel has targeted the critical infrastructure in Gaza, including water supply systems. And reduced the water supply allocated to governorates in west bank.

Mekorot in Latin America

Israel relation with countries in Latin America were strengthened in the 1950s and 1960s, due to joint programs in which Israel shared its experience in areas such as agriculture, medicine, rural, regional and community development. Thousands of Latino trainees participated in study programs in Israel during that time, and relations fluctuated overtime with most of the countries, in 2005. Israel signed a framework agreement with MERCOSUR, an established economic market for free trade between Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and Paraguay. Then in 2014, Israel held the observer state of the Pacific Alliance, a Latin American trade union consists of Mexico, Chile, Colombia, Peru, and Costa Rica. Israel exports around \$900 million worth of goods to the Pacific Alliance annually. As obvious Israeli is trying to maintain relations with Latin America for its economic and political interest.

In October 2023 after the latest war against Gaza, Bolivia has severed diplomatic relations with Israel, and Colombia, Chile, and Honduras have all recalled their ambassadors. Latin America is leading the way in opposing Israel's latest war on Gaza.

Mekorot, the Israeli National Water Company consider the newest agreements in Latin America as an opportunity to expand the company's operations in the region.

Some organizations and campaigns and community representatives are working hard in exposing Mekorot's human rights violation and apartheid policies against Palestinian in Latin America.

Argentina

Field of work: Consulting and Water Management Planning Services and control agreements

Agreement date	Region/ Topic	Notes
Feb 2023	Catamarca, La Rioja, Rio Negro Mekorot is to develop a master plan for these provinces. Formosa and Santa Cruz. Mekorot will serve as a controlling body to implement plans that have already been approved.	The total financial scope of this agreement is estimated to 11 million NIS

Nov 2022	Mendoza and San Juan Mekorot began to prepare master plan for these two pvoinces, designed to address all sectors with planning horizon of up to 2050. (Mekorot ESG Report, 2022)	
Early 2021	Argentine-Israeli Chamber of Commerce Mekorot signed an agreement, directly, with the National Entity for Water and Sanitation Works – ENHOSA. ITopic “the realization of feasibility studies and technology projects applied to water resources, preparation of reports, strengthening of legal frameworks and planning.	
NA	The company Aguas y Saneamiento Argentina (AySA) – the most important provider in the country, second in South America - reported that upon returning from the tour to Israel (2021) it held meetings with Mekorot and with ENHOSA. (fueraimekorot.org)	to date the signing of any specific agreement or convention has not transpired in the media
2011-2016	Sewage Reuse Plant BAHIA BLANCA, Launched 2019	Legal issues, public procurement &tendering
2009	Emergency plan of BAHIA BLANCA	
2009-2012	Water treatment plant, La Plata city Suspended in 2012 with the effort of the Federation of Argentine-Palestinian Entities, the international network Stop the Wall, the Argentine Workers' Central (CTA), the Association of State Workers (ATE) and others through the campaign " Buenos Aires, the Water are Running Turbid ", denouncing the crimes of apartheid against the Palestinian people by Mekorot.	Legal issues public procurement &tendering Suspended in 2012

In Argentina, Mekorot officials signed a series of agreements with the aim of building comprehensive master plans for the water sector, which in recent years has suffered from climate change and the destabilization of the ecological balance. These changes have led the Argentinian government to provide long-term planning and control, relying on the Israeli company. These agreements bring the total number of the company’s connections in Argentina to seven, such that Mekorot is now active in 30% of the country’s territory (jpost, 2023).

In 2009, the town of *Bahía Blanca* went through a severe water crisis, a situation that led to Mekorot's intervention in the design of an "emergency plan" and later in 2011 a sewage reuse plant to allocate recycled water to the Petrochemical Pole, thus alleviating water for domestic use. The project was presented in 2011, the construction began in 2016 and in 2019 the governor María Eugenia Vidal launched its first phase. No records of a tendering process, nor a public hearing on the project, nor an environmental impact assessment, nor consultation or participation of organizations of the Bahian society.

In the city of *La Plata*, with the objective to build a water treatment plant for the region of the provincial capital, Berisso and Ensenada, as a complement to the Donato Gerardi plant and to extend the service in the future by extracting water from the La Plata River. The Company 5 de Septiembre, SOSBA and ABSA together with Mekorot led the process, the Spanish-Israeli

company Ashtrum BV and the construction companies from La Plata Mako and Eleprint completed the team formed for the execution, the 200000 USD agreement was suspended in 2012 after failing to solve the problem it was intended for, with the effort of the Federation of Argentine-Palestinian Entities, the international network Stop the Wall, the Argentine Workers' Central (CTA), the Association of State Workers (ATE) and others through the campaign "**Buenos Aires, the Water are Running Turbid**", denouncing the crimes of apartheid against the Palestinian people by Mekorot and the deal surrounding the project. (Fueramekorot.org, 2024) (greenleft, n.d.).

Dominican Republic, 2023

Field of Work: Design the National Water Management Plan

Agreement date	Region/ Topic	Notes
June, 2023	Design of the National Water Management Plan With the efforts of socio-environmental network and environmental organizations the announcement was rejected.	Cancelled in July 2023

The Dominican Republic hired Mekorot to design the National Water Plan (2023). But due to the irregularities and excessive confidentiality clauses it included, the Socio-Environmental Network challenged the agreement before the public contracting control body, which led to the suspension of the contract.

The Socio-Environmental Network, which brings together some of the country's main environmental organizations stated that a National Hydrological Plan has been already existed along with a diagnosis on which the Mesa del Agua worked for two years, involving contribution from Academia, civil society and specialized government technicians. While The Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development signed a cooperation agreement with the Israeli embassy in 2021 that was used as the basis for the contract with Mekorot.

The Socialist Workers Movement (MST) warned that the Mekorot company has been denounced internationally for its role in stealing water from the Palestinian people, destroying their wells to prevent them from accessing underground sources, as part of the Zionist apartheid tactics. At the end of July, a month after the official announcement of the agreement, the Socio-Environmental Network challenged the contract between the Dominican State and Mekorot before the General Directorate of Public Procurement and Contracting (DGCP), for violating Law 340-06 on purchases and contracting of goods, services, works and concessions, demanding its annulment. It was also denounced that the contract with Mekorot contained numerous confidentiality and non-publicity clauses. (Fueramekorot.org, 2024) (Anred, n.d.).

Chile, 2023

Filed of Work: Regional Water Resources Management Plan

Agreement date	Region/ Topic	Notes
May 2023	Regional Water Resources Management Plan, Biobio Regional Government. The agreement was signed through a private, non-profit corporation "Desarrolla Biobío"	Status: Awaiting reply from Chilean supreme audit authority

In Chile, Mekorot tried to establish ties in Valparaíso years ago, but the organizations that promoted the boycott managed to stop its advance. But recently the Israeli Cooperation Agency and the Biobío Regional Government announced in May 2023 the signing of an agreement with Mekorot to carry out the “Regional Water Resources Management Plan”.

The organization “Lawyers for Palestine” investigated the case, confirming that: the contract was not signed directly by the government, but through a private, non-profit corporation called “Desarrolla Biobío” and thus the Public Procurement Law does not apply. And the agreement includes many irregularities, its validity is one year with automatic renewal, and in case of non-compliance or controversy, it is not settled in Chilean courts, but rather in arbitration under the rules of the International Chamber of Commerce; and other conditions that put public money at risk. “Lawyers for Palestine” presented a request to the Chilean Supreme Audit Authority in March 2024. (AbuSidu, 2024)

Uruguay, 2022

Agreement date	Region/ Topic	Notes
March 2022	the OSE board of directors signed an agreement with Mekorot under which company technicians offer consulting services and training in water issues	Cost \$275K

In Uruguay, Montevideo suffered a water and health crisis in 2023 due to the critical situation of the Santa Lucía River basin, which supplies the water treatment plant that supplies two-thirds of the country's population. The basin is crossed by deforestation, agribusiness, the forestry and cellulose industry, and untreated sewage discharges, among other threats that are at the heart of the Uruguayan production model.

Mekorot has been operating in Uruguay for years, on the idea of using water from the Río de la Plata, which is highly contaminated. In March 2022, OSE signed a contract with the company for 275 thousand dollars for consulting and training in water issues. The government's strategy is to move forward with the Neptuno Project in Arazatí, run by a consortium of private companies, to take water from the Río de la Plata and transport it 72 km to inject it into the network, due to its enormous costs -700 million dollars- and uncertain viability many experts questions this strategy and processes. (elobservador, n.d.)

Peru, 2019

Mekorot in 2019 carried out an assessment for the water company in Lima, with the goal of developing an exploitation plan for the water resources, in purpose of irrigation and producing water at qualities needed for domestic, industrial and agricultural uses.

Brazil, 2017

Mekorot has been involved in the development of groundwater management projects in several regions of the country. It has also been involved in the construction of a wastewater treatment plant in the city of Belo Horizonte in 2017. (Fueramekorot.org, 2024) (Anred, n.d.) while earlier in 2016 state of Bahia decided on April 2nd to end its cooperation agreement with Mekorot signed in 2013 by Embasa and CERB – the two national water companies- due to pressure from campaigners from the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. (PLO, 2016)

Paraguay, 2014

Mekorot and The Paraguayan Sanitation Services Company presented to the President of the Republic Horacio Cartes, a project aimed to solve water salinization problem in the city of Limpio. Which include building a treatment plant in the city, to benefit Limpio, San Lorenzo, Luque and Mariano Roque Alonso communities. The project requires 228,000,000 US dollars' investment. Status unknown.

Mexico, 2013

Mekorot signed a cooperation agreement with the Mexican National Water Commission(CONAGUA) in 2013 for the development of strategies for the rehabilitation, management, and design of groundwater systems. The agreement's first stage's estimated cost is around US\$ 5.5 million. (Fueramekorot.org, 2024)

Mekorot in Africa

In the MENA region, the green colonial dynamics are clearly visible in the projects being implemented by the occupation and its partners in the occupied territories Palestine, the Golan Heights and Jordan. Israel expanded its operation upon the signing of the Abraham Accords with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan in 2020.

Israel Foreign policy regarding Africa is clearly stated by the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a meeting with Israel's ambassadors to Africa in 2017, Netanyahu stated that Israel's goal is to leverage "trade, technology and investments" to urge African states to vote in favour of Israel at the United Nations and other international organizations. This tactic has effectively worked with some countries. Furthermore, Israel's interest in Africa extends beyond political alliances, Israel sees both an opportunity for resource extraction and market creation for Israeli goods and products. (Maganjo, 2024)

In 2021, Israel became an observer member of the African Union (AU) and committed to economic, social, and military projects in a number of countries. Thereafter, agreements for jointly implementing projects, such as renewable energy, agri-business and water projects and various agreements were signed right after, most of these agreements proceeds with high confidentiality. Israel observer status in AU was suspended in Feb 2023. Here are some agreements between Israel water company Mekorot and African governments.

Morocco, 2022

Agreement date	Region/ Topic	Notes
2023	The Tangier seawater desalination plant agreement signed Feb 2023 with Mekorot, the plant was intended to supply water to the Tangier-Tetouan-Al Hoceima region, which is facing persistent water stress. The agreement was cancelled on Sep 2023, and the Moroccan government will build a water highway to meet the needs of the people of the region	Cancelled due land constrains as reported by Moroccan side in Al Akhbar local newspaper

2022	Mekorot has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Kingdom of Morocco's National Office of Electricity and Drinking Water (ONEE), to cooperate on seawater desalination, facility management, performance improvement, water sanitation, digital systems management, R&D. (Mekorot, 2024)	
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Morocco is facing water scarcity and many of its rural areas suffer from poor water sanitation. Salma Bougarrani, co-founder and CEO of Green Watech, a Moroccan organization dedicated to developing and promoting accessible water sanitation solutions throughout the country, stated that more than 14 million people in Morocco still pour their wastewater directly into rivers, Bougarrani consider this agreement is an opportunity to work on rural sanitation (jpost, 2022). Beside that many other agreements and business collaborations between Morocco and Israel resulted from the Abraham Accords in 2020.

Mekorot is still promoting it-self to countries in the region as a world-leading utility with a comprehensive approach to water resource management; covering the entire water cycle integrating different sources (seawater and brackish water desalination, groundwater, surface water, and reclaimed water), as well as digital solutions. And shows preparedness and availability to international cooperation to share best practices and lessons learned in management of a disaster-resilient water utility and continues to drain the Jordan river and control over Palestinian water resources in West Bank and Gaza.

Kenya, 2016

Agreement date	Region/ topic	Notes
2016	In Busia, Baringo and Garissa for improving water quality Project total cost 500million shilling	Agreement cancelled for the favor of Kenyan Talents

The Kenyan government partnered with Mekorot in 2016 to implement a project in Busia, Baringo and Garissa, the project aimed to improve water quality, and focused on preventing and correcting turbidity. (Nation Africa, 2016,2020) Also in 2020 MASHAV organized events and webinars discussing water issues, lectured by Mekorot International Projects coordinator, on the same time Israel was trying to revive other agreement with Kenyan that was cancelled by Kenyan government to the favour of local Kenyan talents.

And on the Kenya extended cooperation with Israel, the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu clearly indicated his hopes that Kenya would "serve as a gateway for trade and international cooperation with the rest of Africa. (Xinhua, 2023)

Uganda, 2011

Agreement date	Region/ topic	Notes
2011	Mekorot agreement with Ugandan National Water & Sewage Corporation, to build 11 dams serving 2 million residents.	Cost unknown

Mekorot company signed an agreement with the government-owned Ugandan National Water and Sewerage Corporation in 2011 for developing the water infrastructures, Mekorot was supposed to build 11 dams and reservoirs to supply water for two million residents. Mekorot started with projects in Karamoja district in Uganda’s arid northeast and plans to expand its work throughout the country and to include the development of sewage treatment plants. (Israel Trade Mission to South Africa, 2011).

Ghana, 2006-2009

Agreement date	Region/ topic	Notes
2006-2009	Under MASHAV projects, Mekorot upgraded two existing water wells and drilled and connected two new ones to complement the project.	

Under the framework of the “reducing neonatal and maternal mortality in Kumasi” project implemented by MASHAV- the Israeli Agency for International Development Cooperation- this project was mainly designed to reduce neonatal and maternal mortality in Kumasi by establishment of mother and baby care unit and providing capacity building training for medical staff, during that the need to upgrade the water quality arose and to ensure regular water supply and to expand Komfo Anokye Teaching hospital access to healthy sources of water. Thus, MASHAV sent experts from Mekorot in order to upgrade two existing water wells and drilling and connecting two new ones.

Conclusion

Israel's capacity in water management technology has enabled it to integrate it into its export diplomacy, aimed at strengthening and normalizing its political power internationally. Israel is using these projects for rewriting the international narrative around the situation in Israel/Palestine and mitigating criticism of Israel as a settler-colonial, Apartheid state.

Israel forcefully holds exclusive control over most of the water resources between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, including the sea of Galilee and all water resources in the occupied Syrian Golan. And the current war on Gaza left 2.2 million residents without access to water. Mekorot, Israel's state-run water company, and its executive arm in the OPT for water issues, is practicing inequality, collective punishment and depriving Palestinian people from basic human rights.

Israel is guilty of implementing a system of "apartheid" against Palestinians limiting their ability to meet their basic needs for hydration, hygiene, sanitation, and forcing the Palestinian Authority to purchase water from Mekorot, at a much higher cost. And when Israel began its military campaign in October 2023, it used Mekorot to cut the water supply to Gaza completely, forcing residents to drink polluted water. Hospitals were left without proper sanitation. Erik Swyngedouw, a geographer at the University of Manchester who researches the intersection of water and politics stated that "Israel is using its strategic control over water resources on the one hand, and water distribution on the other, as a geopolitical tool and does so in highly unequal ways".

Mekorot is exporting its apartheid method to countries all over the world, Mekorot is designing and implementing high cost projects and the resulted water will be sold in high cost for the elites; those who can afford it. And by this it will continue financing its apartheid system against Palestinian.

Mekorot s' oppression of Palestinians has urged human rights organizations, defender and activist around the world to advocate toward sever ties with the Israeli water company.

Recommendation

We urge and appeal to all public entities, international communities to dis-entail, terminate, and advocate against any kind of contracts or agreements associated to Mekorot and cease all forms of complicity with Israeli and international companies that profit from and enable the human rights violations of the Palestinian people.

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