***COVID-19***

The COVID-19 infection rate in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip is surging. As of March 5, 2021, there were more than 218,600 cases of COVID-19 in Occupied Palestinian Territories, including 56,000 cases in the Gaza Strip. At least 2,200 Palestinians have died from COVID-19, and hospitals are severely overstretched. An estimated 40% of the population in the Gaza Strip could be infected.In what has been termed “medical apartheid,” Israel has fully vaccinated nearly half of its population while ignoring its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention and denying vaccines to Palestinians under occupation.

***Health in the West Bank***

• Israel controls all the water resources of the West Bank, reserving 85% for its own citizens. 650,000 Palestinians suffer lack of access to water and poor water quality due to Israel’s policies. 156,000 Palestinians are unconnected to a water network or receive water at most once a week.

• Israel’s illegal settlers consume as much as 700 litres/person/day of water. Palestinians have access to only 20–61 l/p/d (WHO recommends a minimum 100 l/p/d).

• Israel’s water restrictions and denial of building permits (including for toilets and structures for privacy) make it impossible to maintain a sanitary environment, particularly for the personal hygiene needs of women and girls.

• Israeli factories and the Israeli army discard toxic waste on Palestinian land.

• 44% of Palestinian children in rural areas suffer from diarrhea because of sewage from settlements and poor water quality.

***Health in the Gaza Strip***

• With the 14-year-long blockade barring the entry of much needed medicine and equipment, the health sector is on the verge of collapse. The massively overcrowded hospitals are forced to reduce cleaning and sterilizing. Staff cannot regularly wash their hands when going from one patient to another. Ventilators and other resources to deal with Covid-19 patients are in very short supply.

• Israel often prevents seriously ill patients from leaving the Gaza Strip to get life-saving treatment in the West Bank and abroad.

• 97% of the water is unfit for consumption. Lack of clean water accounts for more than 26% of all reported disease and more than 12% of child deaths, and high levels of contamination of products and food produced with water have taken water-transmitted diseases to epidemic proportions.

• The prevalence of chronic malnutrition is driven by the lack of safe drinking water, as are urinary tract infections, dehydration, and kidney failure. More than half the children under 5 suffer from chronic malnutrition. 60% of kindergarten-age children suffer from at least one parasitic infection.