

# BARRIERS TO WATER JUSTICE IN PALESTINE



## Aims

Understanding challenges to water justice in Palestine



## Materials

Water justice video, flipchart paper and sticky notes



## Time

30 minutes



## Age

Age +12

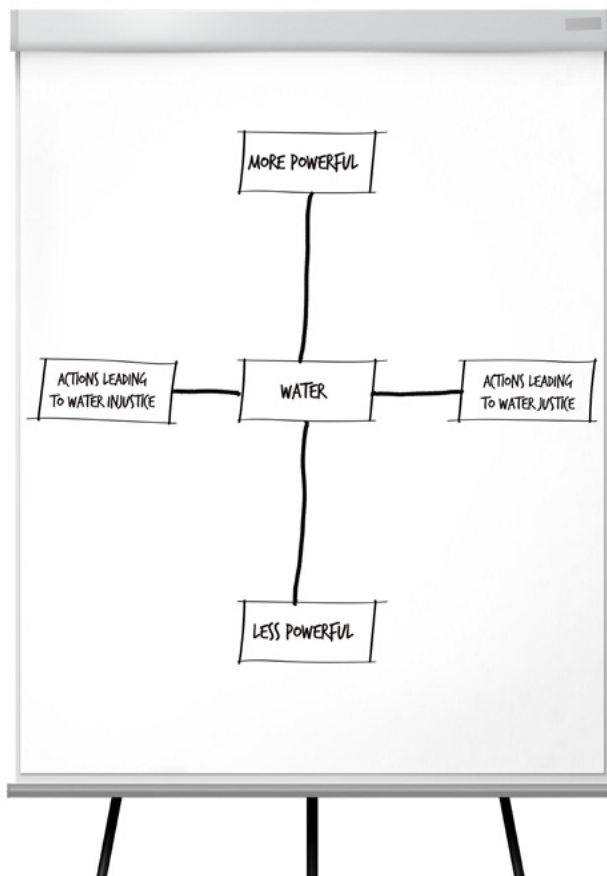
## Section One

### Step 1

Watch the Water Justice video contained in the trunk of the tree. If you have already watched the video, then revisit the Palestine section. While watching this section, ask the young people to note down the names of all the different actors in this situation (e.g. Palestinians living in Gaza, Israeli Army), and what their role/position is in relation to the others.

### Step 2

Draw a water power map on flipchart paper and ask the groups to discuss and position each actor on the 'Water Power' map in relation to how powerful you think they are, and also whether their actions indicate a commitment to water justice for the many, or the few.



**Israeli military**

### Palestinian Authority

The West Bank is governed by the Palestinian Authority and Gaza has been governed by Hamas since the 2006 elections.

### Palestinian residents of The West Bank

### Palestinian residents of Gaza

### Israeli water company

People need to buy water and have to buy it from Israeli water company.

**Israeli settlers**

## Section Two

### Step 1

Draw the table below on flipchart paper, split the group into 3/4 smaller groups. Give each group a different set of coloured sticky notes, one colour per group. Explain to the young people that you are going to read out a series of statements (see below), and they must decide which barrier to water justice is being described. Once they have decided, they go up to the flipchart and put their post it notes in that square (see answers below). The group that gets the most correct post it notes in the correct description wins.

THE ISRAELI BLOCKADE OF GAZA	DELIBERATE DESTRUCTION OF WATER INFRASTRUCTURE	SEAWATER INTRUSION	DESTROYED, DAMAGED OR FAILING WATER PIPES
CONTAMINATION OF GROUND WATER SUPPLY	HIGH FINANCIAL COST OF WATER	HARSH/SLOW PERMIT PROCESS FOR PALESTINIANS	POPULATION GROWTH
ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS	UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF WATER SUPPLY	EXTRACTION PRESSURES ON WATER SUPPLY	WATER AGREEMENTS IGNORED

### Barriers to Water Justice Statements:

**Deliberate destruction of water infrastructure** – The water system is often targeted for damage or destruction during conflict.

**Israeli Blockade of Gaza** – Israel restricts the import of materials needed for water infrastructure, making it challenging to address water supply and sanitation issues. Israel also controls most of the water resources in the area, limiting Palestinians ability to access and manage these resources.

**Harsh/slow permit process for Palestinians** – Palestinians struggle to get permission from Israelis authorities to build or repair water infrastructure, causing delays and complications in addressing water needs.

**High financial cost of water** – Palestinians do not have access to enough water, so must buy extra water from Israeli water companies. The cost can be very high, and it is a challenge to afford this essential resource.

**Water Agreements Ignored** – Israelis and Palestinians do not share water resources, and despite a plan for both to have access, this is now being disregarded by the Israelis, negatively affecting access to water for Palestinians.

**Israeli Settlements** – Settlers use up a disproportionate amount of the water resources in The West Bank, leading to shortages for Palestinian communities.

**Destroyed, damaged or failing water pipes** – Water supply is often disrupted which affects the distribution of water from its source to Palestinian homes and communities. This disruption can occur due to conflicts, natural disasters, or aging infrastructure. When pipes are broken or disconnected, water cannot reach its intended destination, leading to water shortages and the inability to access clean water for drinking, cooking, and hygiene.

**Extraction pressures on water supply** – Palestine, particularly Gaza, faces water scarcity due to its arid climate and limited water sources during the summer months. Over-extraction of groundwater exacerbates this problem.

**Seawater intrusion** - In Gaza, the over-pumping of groundwater has led to the intrusion of salty seawater into underground aquifers, rendering the water undrinkable and harmful for agricultural use.

**Unequal distribution of water supply** – Israeli settlements in the West Bank often receive better access to water sources, including a higher volume of water compared to Palestinian communities. Also, large amounts of water are pumped from Palestinian land for use in Israel.

**Contamination of ground water supply** – Occurs when pollutants, such as sewage, chemicals, or bacteria, enter the water sources, and can lead to serious health issues when consumed or used for personal hygiene. This restricts access to safe and clean water but also poses significant health risks to Palestinians who come into contact with it.

**Population growth** - Increasing population in Palestinian territories puts additional pressure on already limited water resources.



### Summary:

The issue of water access in Palestine is complex and multifaceted, involving political, social, and environmental aspects. Addressing this challenge requires cooperation between stakeholders, equitable distribution of resources, and long-term sustainable solutions.

### Extension

Ask the young people to consider the situation in Palestine and compare it to the situation in Malawi. What do they see as common factors in both contexts? How are the barriers in each context similar? How are the barriers different? Who holds the power in the situation in Malawi? Is it different? How so? Are the possible solutions in each context the same or different?