تكييف، لا مراوح، لا حمامات. سمعنا أيضًا أن الاستحمام في البحر مستحيل معظم الوقت. لذلك لا يوجد راحة. ونحن نعلم أن الجنود الإسرائيليين أيضًا تأثروا، مع حالات جفاف ودخول مستشفيات.

النظام البيئي :في هذه الصورة يمكنكم رؤية قبل وبعد. في الحقيقة، 90 بالمئة من الأشجار في البساتين الزراعية القليلة الموجودة تضررت أو قُطعت، وكذلك معظم الأشجار البرية. يمكنكم أيضًا رؤية البساتين [في الصورة أعلاه] والبيوت البلاستيكية أدناه، قبل وبعد. وهناك كثير من الجوانب البيئية الأخرى مثل تلوث البحر والمزيد. النظام البيئي كله، الذي كان أصلًا في حالة هشة، ينهار. لن يكون لدي وقت للدخول في كل شيء.

أريد أن أكرس آخر دقيقتين لما يمكن فعله، ولأحدثكم عن مشروع "معهد عربة للدراسات البيئية"، الذي أعمل كرئيسة لمجلس إدارته. بالتعاون مع جمعية فلسطينية "دمور للتنمية المجتمعية"، المعهد يروّج لمساعدات إنسانية مستدامة في غزة تحت عنوان "إطلاق الأمل في غزة". إنه ائتلاف من عدة منظمات. المساعدة الرئيسية خُطِّط لها أن تكون في المجال المعروف بـWASH ، وهو اختصار لـ Water, Sanitation, Hygiene, and Energy Technologies (الماء، الصرف الصحي، النظافة، وتكنولوجيات الطاقة). الهدف الأول—هذا حتى قبل الحرب—كان إدخال إلى المناطق غير الموصولة، أي التي ليست مرتبطة بالكهرباء أو الماء أو شبكات الصرف الصحي، طاقات متجددة وأنظمة متنوعة، مثل إنتاج مياه الشرب من الجو. ما نراه هنا هو شركةWatergen ، معالجة مياه الصرف، والطاقة الشمسية. بعد اندلاع الحرب، هذه المبادرة أسست مخيمات لاجئين لحوالي 12,000 شخص، توفر المساعدة الأولية من ماء، طعام، بطانيات، إسعافات أولية، وبناء مراحيض. الهدف كان إدخال مثل هذه التكنولوجيات المستدامة إلى المخيمات. حصلت الموافقة من "منسق أعمال الحكومة في الأراضي [الفلسطينية]"، ولكن بسبب استئناف القتال، هذا المعدات تنتظر في حاويات عند كرم شالوم لعدة أشهر، وأموال المساعدات حُوّلت لشراء وتوزيع الطعام كلما أمكن، على أساس المبدأ أن المساعدة الإنسانية تعلو على النزاعات السياسية، خاصة في أوقات الأزمات. هناك أيضًا منظمات أخرى ناشطة في المجال الإنساني والبيئي، بما في ذلك EcoPeace ومعهد متقيم، الذين يطورون برامج مساعدات وخطط تعافٍ مستدام لليوم التالي.

الخاتمة :في تقرير نشرناه قبل الحرب مباشرة، أشرنا إلى تحدي تغيّر المناخ كفرصة فريدة للتعاون الإقليمي، النمو الاقتصادي المستدام، وفرص واسعة في مجالات الاقتصاد، الزراعة، الطعام، الماء، الطاقة، والصحة، إلى جانب تعزيز الاستقرار السياسي الإقليمي. تغيّر المناخ لا يتوقف بسبب الحروب—على العكس. وحتى بعد الحرب، في اليوم التالي، سيبقى التحدي والفرصة. أريد أن أنهي باقتباس من السفير جدعون بيهار، الذي قبل أيام فقط أنهى دوره كمبعوث خاص لإسرائيل إلى الأمم المتحدة لشؤون المناخ. في مقابلة أمس، قال إن الشركاء الإقليميين ضروريون لخلق صمود مناخي إقليمي. لذلك لدينا أيضًا، آمل، نافذة إلى الأفق. شكرًا.

“ Environment, Climate, and the War in Gaza”, Prof. Maya Negev, University of Haifa, 7.8.2025

Introduction

Hello everyone. Welcome to *Eyes on Gaza*, our daily gathering that combines protest and learning. Today we conclude the seventh week of what began as a momentary idea during a war with Iran and has turned into a meeting place of protest and learning for many of us. Today we host Prof. Maya Negev from the School of Public Health at the University of Haifa. She specializes in policy, health, environment, and issues of climate resilience. Yesterday, while preparing her presentation, she wrote to me about how difficult it was to prepare this lecture. “It’s not that we didn’t know,” she said, “but the scope of the destruction is completely apocalyptic.” I am very grateful to her for coming to speak on this very complex and very important subject, which is sometimes pushed aside as if it were a luxury, something secondary—but it really isn’t. Maya will speak for eight minutes, and afterwards we will leave time for discussion. As usual, anyone who wants to ask a question is invited to write it in the chat, and I will read it to Maya. Thank you very much, Maya, for joining us and for helping us bring some order to this.

Talk

Thank you very much for the invitation. The war has severe consequences for cross-border natural resources and life-supporting ecosystems in our region. Most systems in Gaza have collapsed, with extensive impacts on public health and the environment. Today we will touch upon issues such as water, sewage, energy, waste, climate change, air pollution, noise, and more. And really, we will do this very briefly. Each of these areas deserves a meeting of its own. Today it will be an introduction. I will share images along the way.

Water: Even before October 7, 97 percent of the water in Gaza was contaminated and unsafe to drink. Before the war, the main water sources were groundwater, desalination, and water from Israel and Egypt. Due to damage to infrastructure, especially electricity supply, desalination stopped. Water flow from Israel decreased significantly, and the ability to pump from wells was severely impaired because of difficulties in access and lack of electricity. Here in the picture, you can see people standing in line to fill water from a truck.

Sewage: From the very beginning of the war, sewage systems stopped functioning. Some sewage is diverted to reservoirs, some of which are at risk of overflowing. There seems to be widespread but insufficient use of cesspits, and these too are at risk of collapse. In effect, there is widespread risk of population exposure to sewage and wastewater, as well as concern that sewage seeps into groundwater and may contaminate drinking water with biological and chemical pollutants.

Waste: There is essentially no waste treatment. The entire solid waste treatment system has collapsed, and huge piles of waste are accumulating. As you can see, this also includes hazardous waste and the danger of disease spread. Another significant environmental challenge is construction debris. The fighting has generated 53 million tons of construction and infrastructure debris, including asbestos, heavy metals, unexploded ordnance, and also body parts.

Electricity and energy: Most production has been damaged or halted. This includes power stations, generators, and solar panels. The stations and generators are also non-functional due to fuel shortages, and all have been damaged by destruction. Accordingly, many services that require energy have been harmed: water, sewage, waste, sanitation services, health, education, transportation—including aid vehicles. Cooking requires the greatest amount of household energy, and this is a daily challenge. We will get to that in a moment. When there is fuel, generators are used, but these are unreliable and polluting. On the left you can see the number of hours per day of electricity availability in Gaza, and on the right the electricity sources. Here you can see a sewage

treatment facility that operated on solar panels, or partly on solar panels, which were damaged. And on the right you can see the solar field.

Air pollution and noise: As a result of the destruction of houses and infrastructure, there is heavy pollution that harms vulnerable populations such as those with respiratory and heart diseases, and children. Constant noise. We have heard from many of the released hostages about the heavy explosions they constantly heard there. In the absence of waste management, uncontrolled burning of waste also causes air pollution. Since cooking is the primary household energy need today, and when people who reach aid centers receive food that requires cooking—rice, pasta, or chickpeas—we hear (Nir Hasson [Haaretz] reported on this) that people are cooking them over plastic, burning plastic, which also causes air pollution in the camps.

Climate and extreme heat: We know we are in a hotspot region. We are experiencing extreme heat waves. They are longer, more severe. Even now we are facing a heat wave. This picture is from the beginning of last week. So extreme heat is in fact a health hazard. It is directly linked to increased morbidity and mortality, including higher risk of heart attacks, strokes, chronic and infectious diseases. Especially among the elderly, the chronically ill, infants, and children up to age five. Negative fluid balance due to little drinking, which is the situation in Gaza, increases vulnerability to dehydration, heatstroke, and kidney damage. It can also be assumed that malnutrition is a risk factor, due to weakening of all body systems, including temperature regulation. Reaching food distribution centers requires walking several kilometers in each direction. This is particularly challenging for vulnerable populations, and in fact for everyone, in any weather and especially in extreme heat. And in Gaza there is no escape from the heat. No air conditioning, no fans, no showers. We have also heard that bathing in the sea is impossible much of the time. So there is no relief. And we know that Israeli soldiers have also been affected, with cases of dehydration and hospitalizations.

The ecosystem: In this image you can see before and after. In fact, 90 percent of the trees in the few agricultural orchards that existed have been damaged or cut down, as well as most wild trees. You can also see orchards [in the photo above] and greenhouses below, before and after. And there are many other environmental aspects such as sea pollution and more. The entire ecosystem, which was already in a fragile state, is collapsing. I will not have time to go into everything.

I want to dedicate my last two minutes to what can be done, and to tell you about a project of the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies, of which I serve as chair of the board. In cooperation with the Palestinian “Damour for Community Development” Association, the Institute is promoting sustainable humanitarian aid in Gaza under the title *Jump Starting Hope in Gaza*. It is a coalition of several organizations. The main aid was planned to be in the field known as WASH, an acronym for Water, Sanitation, Hygiene, and Energy Technologies. The first goal—this was even before the war—was to introduce into off-grid areas, meaning those not connected to electricity, water, or sewage networks, renewable energies and various systems, for example atmospheric drinking water production. What we see here is Watergen company, wastewater treatment, and solar energy. After the outbreak of the war, this initiative established refugee camps for about 12,000 people, providing initial aid of water, food, blankets, first aid, and building toilets. The goal was to introduce such sustainable technologies into the camps. Approval was received from the [Israeli] “Coordinator of Government Activities in the [Palestinian] Territories”, but due to the resumption of fighting, this equipment has been waiting in containers at Kerem Shalom for several months, and aid funds were diverted to the purchase and distribution of food whenever possible, based on the principle that humanitarian aid rises above political disputes, especially in times of crisis. There are also other organizations active in the humanitarian and environmental field, including EcoPeace and the Mitvim Institute, which are advancing aid programs and sustainable recovery plans for the day after.

Conclusion: In a report we published just before the war, we pointed out the challenge of climate change as a unique opportunity for regional cooperation, sustainable economic growth, and vast

opportunities in the fields of economy, agriculture, food, water, energy, and health, alongside the promotion of regional political stability. Climate change does not stop because of wars—on the contrary. And even after the war, on the day after, the challenge and the opportunity will remain.

I want to end with a quote from Ambassador Gideon Behar, who just a few days ago completed his role as Israel's special envoy to the UN on climate change. In an interview yesterday, he said that regional partners are necessary for creating regional climate resilience. So we also have, I hope, a window to the horizon. Thank you.