



# MAURITIUS

October 1<sup>st</sup> 2023

Att.: The Chief Commissioner  
Executive Council  
Rodrigues Regional Assembly

***Re: Proposed MOU with MEKOROT Development and Enterprise Ltd. & Rodrigues Public Utilities Corporation (RPUC)***

Sir,

Assalam Aleikum,

Greetings from Friends of Al Aqsa (Mauritius).

We refer to the announcement made following the meeting of the Executive Council of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly dated 22 September 2023, under your chairmanship, where it is announced the intention for RPUC to enter an MoU with *MEKOROT Development and Enterprise Ltd* as consultant, in view of mitigating Rodrigues' water problems and assisting with the preparation of tender documents pertaining.

We fully appreciate the desire of the Executive Council to tackle the ongoing water issues plaguing Rodrigues since decades and negatively impacting on its population. However, we believe that entering such a partnership with MEKOROT, Israel's water company which has been instrumental in nurturing water apartheid in Palestine, is inappropriate and, to say the least, unjustified and untimely for the following reasons:

- Mekorot is the Israeli public water company which provides 90% of drinking water for Israeli citizens. Water management and supply is controlled by the Israeli state inside the Green Line as well as in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.



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- Mekorot provides infrastructure for water supplies in the settlements and manages water stolen from Palestinians in the occupied territories.
- In the Nagab/Negev, Israel refuses to acknowledge the 45 villages where 160,000 Palestinian Bedouins live and prohibits the construction of water networks to provide drinking water in these villages.
- Through the denial to access water and sanitation, Mekorot collaborates with the state of Israel in the implementation of an institutionalized **“water apartheid”**, which is a central component of Israel’s policies of ethnic cleansing of Palestinian communities, and considering the grave implications of the denial to access of water, may be involved in the crime of persecution.
- Mekorot further profits from Israeli policies, such as the settlements and the Wall of Shame, which imply a large range of human rights violations.
- Mekorot implements a series of Israeli violations of rights included in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of, Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Chief Commissioner,

The right to water has been recognized as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living under Article 11 (1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The right to water is also protected under other international treaties and is also essential to the enjoyment of the rights to health, adequate housing and food. The human right to water entitles everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic uses.



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## Water apartheid made by Mekorot

1. Mekorot has been responsible for water rights violations since the 1950s when it built Israel's national water carrier, which is diverting the Jordan River from the West Bank and Jordan to serve Israeli communities along the coast and in the southern desert.
2. At the same time, it deprives the Palestinian community from the possibility of access to Jordan River water.
3. At a special meeting of the Knesset Finance Committee to mark the 75th anniversary of the founding of Mekorot, its CEO Shimon Ben-Hamo predicted that *"already by the start of 2014 Israel will have enough water to replenish 1.5 million cubic meters in missing reserves."*
4. At the same time Israel and Mekorot are systematically depriving Palestinians - not only in the OPT - from their right to water and sanitation.
5. Managing the Israeli water theft and apartheid in the OPT: In 1982 the West Bank water infrastructure, controlled by the Israeli army, was handed over to Mekorot by a military order.
6. Mekorot operates some 42 wells in the West Bank, mainly in the Jordan Valley region, which mostly supply the Israeli settlements.
7. This allows Mekorot to profit from the settlements and the related human rights violations. Mekorot profits also from the apartheid Wall and its wells, now behind the Apartheid Wall, which bars Palestinians access to their own wells and allows Mekorot exclusive benefit of the underground water resources.
8. Mekorot systematically discriminates against Palestinians: Palestinian consumption in the OPT is about 70 litres a day per person – well below the 100 litres per capita daily recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) – whereas Israeli daily per capita consumption, at about 300 litres, which is about four times as much. In some rural communities Palestinians survive on far less than even the average 70 litres, in some cases barely 20 litres per day, the minimum amount recommended by the WHO for emergency situations response.
9. In recent years, Palestinians have bought some 50 MCM water per year. This water is extracted by Mekorot from the Mountain Aquifer, and Palestinians should be able to extract for themselves if they were allowed to dig and maintain their own wells.



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10. Mekorot, in this way, profits from the overall system of human rights violations installed by the Israeli occupation.<sup>1</sup>
11. According to the World Bank, *“The cost to the economy of foregone opportunity in irrigated agriculture is significant, with upper bound preliminary estimates that could be as high as 10% of GDP and 110,000 jobs.”*

Chief Commissioner,

Adding insult to injury, not later than July last, WAFA reports that the Israeli national water company, Mekorot, has reduced the daily amount of water supply to the provinces of Hebron and Bethlehem in the occupied West Bank by about 6,000 cups per day today, according to the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA), which described the move as ‘racist’. PWA said the move deprives the people of their right to obtain sufficient amounts of water, especially in light of the sharp rise in temperatures. *“There are no technical reasons behind this reduction,”* PWA said, adding that *“no faults were detected in the supplying source, but rather it [the move] comes as a discriminatory measure that adds to the racist policies practiced by the occupation authorities.”* According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) and the Palestinian Water Authority, the average Israeli per capita consumption of water is three times higher than the Palestinian per capita, with the Israeli share amounting to about 300 liters per day.

This rate doubles for Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank to more than 7 times the Palestinian consumption per capita. Of note, the average Palestinian per capita consumption of water is less than the minimum internationally recommended amount, according to the standards of the World Health Organization, which is 100 liters per day, as a result of Israeli control over more than 85 percent of Palestinian water resources.

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution 2334 concerns such settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The Fourth Geneva Convention makes it illegal for nations to move populations and establish settlements in territories acquired in a war, and an overwhelming number of countries consider the Israeli settlements to be illegal on that basis



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Chief Commissioner,

As you are aware, from 2015 through 2022, including the above, the **UN General Assembly** has adopted 140 resolutions on Israel, to which the Republic of Mauritius has been a party to.

During the last UN General Assembly, the Israeli Prime minister challenged protests, on a daily basis, by hundreds of thousands of Israeli citizens all around his country and mainly in Tel Aviv. He delivered his speech before an empty venue, showing the disapprobation of most of heads of states and governments with regard to the wrong doings of his far-right extremist government, which puts at stake the hopes for peace in that part of the world, and a fair and just solution to the Palestinian issue without which no peace settlement will ever be on the table.

Chief Commissioner,

We trust that you and your executive council shall give due consideration to our letter of protest against the Regional Assembly decision, and through it the Government of the Republic of Mauritius, to associate itself with MEKOROT, one of the active institutions perpetuating Apartheid and injustice against the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

FRIENDS OF AL AQSA (Mauritius)

Cc : The President of the Republic of Mauritius  
The Prime minister of the Republic of Mauritius  
The Leader of the Opposition  
Members of Parliament  
Members of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly  
Members of Diplomatic Corps  
The media