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Israeli occupation and the lasting environmental and health legacy of the occupied Palestinian territories

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Since 1967, the occupied Palestinian territories have increasingly come under the ultimate political, economic and civil control of Israel. The associated structures and laws imposed across the occupied territories have caused immeasurable damage to both the environment and health of Palestine. While the Israeli government ensures that its citizens enjoy the benefits of a clean and comfortable environment, the opposite is true in the occupied Palestinian territories. Israel has instituted an exploitative regime that pursues policies of expansionism, industrialization and urbanization that have neither promoted sustainability nor conservation in the occupied Palestinian territories. For example, the over-pumping of deepwater wells by the Israeli water authorities in the occupied Palestinian territories has impacted overall water quality. Sewage treatment facilities in both the West Bank and Gaza are inadequate for the millions of inhabitants. Furthermore, wastewater from illegal Israeli settlements located across the West Bank is not restricted to purely domestic effluent. It often includes pesticides, asbestos, batteries, cement and aluminum which contain carcinogenic and hazardous compounds. Moreover, Israeli and Palestinian environmental groups claim exposure to hazardous waste is making residents of the West Bank sick. This paper explores the environmental and health legacies associated with Israel's abrogation of responsibility as the occupier and custodian of the environment as stipulated by the Geneva Conventions.

Biography

Denise DeGarmo has her expertise in international relations and nuclear security. She received her PhD from the University of Michigan. She is a Professor Emerita from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville where she taught classes in international relations, peace and conflict resolution and nuclear security. She was also the Director of the Peace and International Studies Minor.

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