Water Diplomacy in the Jordan River Basin

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Outline

- Lower Jordan River Basin Context
- Water Diplomacy:
  - Legal,
  - Institutional,
  - Technical, and
  - Strategic Planning
- Conclusion

Based on findings in Co-Authored Chapter by Samer Talozi and Natasha Westheimer
Background on the Lower Jordan River Basin

- Riparians: Jordan, Palestine, and Israel (Syria and Lebanon)
- 98% of the river’s flow is diverted, high salinity & pollution
- Devastation to the Dead Sea
- Water access varies drastically across the region
  - Jordanians - 125 l/c/d
  - Palestinians in the West Bank - 81.3 l/c/d
  - Palestinians in Gaza - 21.4 l/c/d
  - Israelis - 289 l/c/d
- No formal mechanism for management of shared water
Legal Framework

- No multi-lateral legal arrangement
- 1995 Oslo Accords: Article 40
- Legal resistance to secure water rights: petitions and civil disobedience
Institutional Arrangements

- Unilateral institutions in Jordan, Israel, and Palestine are insufficient
- Israeli-Jordanian Joint Water Committee
- Israeli-Palestinian Jordanian Water Committee
Technical Arrangements

- **Political level**: US Geological Survey (USGS)-facilitated *Regional Water Data Bank*

- **Academia**: “Globaler Wandel des Wasserkreislaufs (GLOWA)” Jordan River Initiative

- **Civil Society**: Arava Institute for Environmental Studies & EcoPeace Middle East
Strategic Planning

- **National level strategies**: supporting economic development and national water security
- **Regional level**: Red Sea-Dead Sea Water Conveyance project
- **Civil Society**: Regional NGO Masterplan for the Lower Jordan River
Conclusion

- Without a regional institution to manage shared water, such as a river basin organization, water diplomacy occurs on alternative platforms.
- Territorial disputes, security concerns, and limited institutional arrangements to implement legal agreements minimize the effectiveness of these mechanisms.
- Without an institutional structure that has broad political-level support, such as an RBO, water diplomacy in Israel, Palestine, and Jordan is insufficient to achieve improved transboundary water governance.

Thank you

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