

## **Israel and Jordan Expand Regional Cooperation**

Time and again, Israel has demonstrated a willingness to address challenges facing the Jewish state, but also impacting people all across the world. This priority has not been lost amid the overwhelming security challenges facing Israel today. While many parts of the region are aflame, one of Israel's latest projects has been focused on addressing a challenge shared by all countries in the Middle East—water scarcity.

Early this year, Israel signed The Red Sea-Dead Sea canal agreement with Jordan that seeks to increase the availability of fresh water in one of the most arid parts of the world. Along with the World Bank, Israel will help Jordan build a desalination plant at Aqaba, on the Red Sea.

The historic agreement allows the two countries to share the potable water produced by the plant, while the byproduct of desalination, a salty brine, will be pumped north to help combat the sinking water level of the Dead Sea. Israel also committed to releasing an additional 50 million cubic meters of water from the Sea of Galilee to Jordan.

Upon signing the accord, leaders from both nations noted that this deal will help ensure cooperation between Israel and Jordan long into the future.

“This is the most important agreement since the peace agreement with Jordan [in 1995],” Israeli National Infrastructures, Energy and Water Resources Minister Silvan Shalom said. “It will help to rehabilitate the Dead Sea and provide a solution to the water problems in Jordan and the Arava.”

Israel and Jordan have also committed to providing water from the project to the Palestinian Authority.

The two countries' agreement is the product of Israel's status as a global leader in water technology. The Jewish state is currently recycling over 80 percent of its water and aiming to recycle 95 percent by 2020, while continuing to build new desalination plants in Israel, the region and the United States.

At a time when much of the region is engulfed in terror and sectarian violence, the Jewish state continues to move forward in strengthening regional partnerships and in improving lives through innovation.