

# Human interventions affecting water availability

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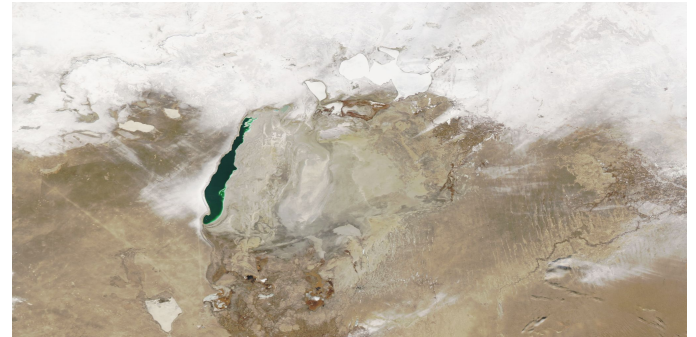
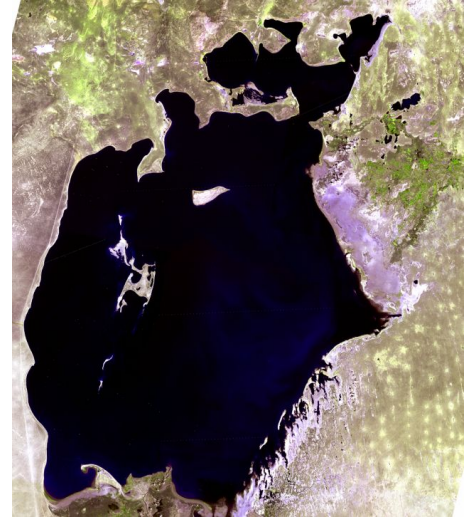
Due to human interventions there have been several repercussions in both the environment and the water causing water pollution. It is related to ecosystems that have water as their main element. This is caused by multiple and specific factors: discharges from industrial and agricultural activities and from usual human activities that reach rivers, lakes and seas.

Fish, due to human interventions, have polluted the water leading to change in quality and contamination.

# The Aral Sea

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The Aral Sea, due to all human intervention, has dried up, causing catastrophic effects on livelihoods and dependent ecosystems. Originally the lake was very large, but since 1960 the volume has decreased more and more. As a result of the drying up, it has left a part of the plain uncovered, covered with toxic chemicals and salt.



# Sea of Galilee

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With human intervention, attempts were made to raise the sea level as in the case of Israel's Sea of Galilee. Because of all the dry winters, the sea has had a critical drop in its level, leading to negative effects on ecosystems and humans. The people thought of pumping millions of litres of freshwater and feeding the sea to make the level rise.

1912



Nowadays



# Construction of dams

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Recently, there have been questions about whether the construction of dams is eroding the right of rivers to flow. There are two conflicting thoughts:

- some people think that interventions are acceptable if they do not reduce the water's capacity to support life
- other people think that it is rare to make life-supporting interventions.

The question is: "Who makes these decisions? On the basis of what these decisions are made?"

Decisions are made after verifying whether this intervention can meet human needs. Choices have to be made on the basis of who has access to water and when, as fresh water is a scarce resource, often renewable in the medium or long term.

In order to ensure that all values are respected, there are rights established (by the ONU) so include perspectives through some democratic to participatory modes of governance. These methods, however, require a human presence (government agency with environmental responsibilities) to act in the interests of the environment, not human interests.

# Rivers as legal persons

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The governments of India and New Zealand have given legal status to certain rivers, to respect their position and the values of the groups in that society.

In March 2017, three rivers, the Whanganui River in New Zealand, and the Ganges and Yamuna rivers in India, were given the legal status of persons.

Their status as legal persons allows them to defend and protect themselves in court, as they have to assert their rights.

In New Zealand, the two guardians have been appointed to act in the interests of the river.

Whanganui river



Yamuna river



## And what of future generations?

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**There is currently a strong concern about actions taken today, as they may have a negative impact on water security, both for people and the ecosystem, in the future. In addition to human actions there is also climate change which is worsening water security and increasing our concern.**

**What is predicted for the future, is that we will have many problems with water if we continues to make changes in the environment.**

# Concluding principles

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The ethical implications of access to water raise important questions about water rights, decisions about water uses and how choices can be made. The discussions are focus on five key principles:

- A human right to safe drinking water and sanitation
- Sustaining ecosystem functions
- Responsible use of water systems
- Participatory water governance
- Safeguarding future generations

Many human interventions will seek to safeguard water security for people and ecosystems, and many more will increase our water challenge.

**Taken from the future learn**

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