

Gaza Flooded after Israel Opens Dam Gates

Israel has opened the floodgates of one of its dams in the eastern part of the Gaza Strip, flooding Palestinian houses and causing severe damage.

The Israeli authorities opened the dam's floodgates without any prior warning or coordination with local authorities in Gaza, stunning the residents of the area, the Press TV correspondent in Gaza reported late on Monday.

There has been heavy rain in the region over the past 24 hours. It seems the Israeli authorities could not handle the huge amount of rainwater and decided to open the floodgates without prior warning.

Because Gaza is located in a low-lying area and the elevation decreases on the way to the Mediterranean Sea, water gushed into the area, flooding two Palestinian villages and displacing a hundred Gazan families.

The locals say Israel intentionally caused the floods, the Press TV correspondent said.

The waters from the dam, called the Valley of Gaza, flooded houses in Johr al-Deek village, which is southeast of Gaza City, and Nusirat in the eastern part of the territory, where the Al-Nusirat refugee camp is also located.

The Valley of Gaza is about 8 kilometers long. It starts on the eastern Gaza border with Israel and ends in the Mediterranean.

The houses of many Palestinians have been flooded and a number of people are trapped inside or on their roofs, while many have also gone missing, the Press TV correspondent said.

Rescue teams are using small boats to evacuate the trapped people.

Hamas has condemned the act as a war crime and has called on all concerned parties to intervene and offer assistance to the locals.

The flooding has made life more difficult for the Gazans, especially for those still living in tents because their homes were destroyed in the December 2008-January 2009 Israeli war on the Gaza Strip.

In the war, more than 1,400 people were killed, mostly women and children, and over 10,000 houses were destroyed or damaged, forcing at least 500 families to live in tents.

Very little progress is seen in reconstruction of the devastated areas in the Gaza Strip, mostly due to the Israeli blockade, which has prevented the delivery of building materials to the coastal enclave.

(Press TV)