

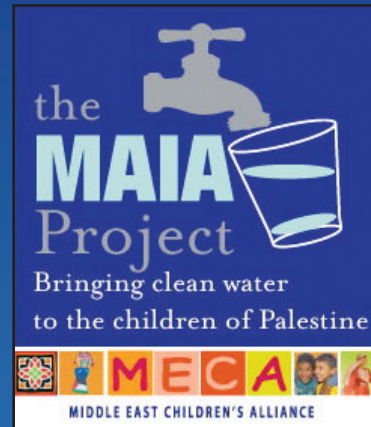
## Where is Gaza?



**GAZA** is a tiny strip of land bordering Egypt at the south end of historic Palestine. Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem together make up the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel.

**RAFAH**, a town and refugee camp of about 150,000 on Egypt's border, is one of only two current entrances in or out of Gaza.

One of earth's most crowded places, Gaza's nearly two million people -- over half children -- all suffer from the lack of safe water for drinking, cooking and bathing.



The Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA), the Maia Project sponsor, is a U.S. nonprofit improving the lives of children in the Middle East through aid, empowerment and education for over 30 years.

[www.mecaforpeace.org](http://www.mecaforpeace.org)

Please donate today or send your contribution by check payable to MRSCP marked "Water" to the P.O. Box below. You may also send a check payable to MECA marked "Madison Maia Unit" to: MECA, 1101 Eighth Street, Berkeley, CA 94710

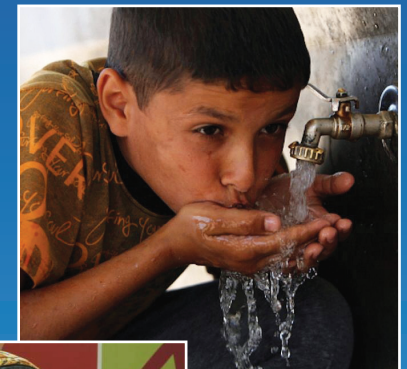
Donations to either MRSCP or MECA are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. 100% of your donation given today or mailed in will go toward the cost of this filter.

[www.madisonrafah.org](http://www.madisonrafah.org)  
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Madison-Rafah Sister City Project  
P.O. Box 5214, Madison WI 53705

FROM MADISON TO GAZA:

# Clean Water for the Children



# You can help provide elementary and preparatory students in Rafah, Palestine, with clean, healthy water to drink.

Tiny Gaza is home to over a million children. At least 95% of the water there is unfit for human consumption without proper filtration, decontamination and desalination. Expensive, imported bottled water is a severe burden on the poor majority of the population.

In 2009, the Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA) launched the Maia Project (Maia means "water" in Arabic) to install water purification and desalination units in children's schools in Gaza.

The project began when students at a UN school for refugees chose clean drinking water as the thing they wanted most for their school. Working with staff and students, MECA funded a water purification and desalination unit there.

Since then, MECA has installed over 70 Gaza-built Maia filters in preparatory, elementary and kindergarten schools, providing clean drinking water to over 73,000 children. The units also benefit families, since children fill containers to take water home.

Four Maia units have now been provided to Rafah schools by the citizens of Madison: three through the efforts of the Madison-Rafah Sister City Project (MRSCP) and one together with First Unitarian Society, Madison Jewish Voice for Peace and Congregation Shaarei Shamayim.

Now, MRSCP aims to raise \$16,000 for a large Maia filter at the Al Shuka Preparatory School which, due to lack of building materials, runs in 2 shifts -- the first one girls and the second co-ed. A total of 2,000 students and their families will be able to get clean water from this unit.



*Palestinian mother washes her daughters outside during power outage in a refugee camp near Khan Younis, Gaza.*

## Why is there a water crisis in Gaza?

At least 95% of the water in Gaza today is polluted with untreated sewage and agricultural chemicals and brackish from seawater, posing grave health risks to children. Contamination has raised water nitrate levels, producing "blue babies" with decreased blood-oxygen levels. Besides making the water too salty to drink, high chlorine levels erode pipes and release contaminants like lead into the water. And all children in Gaza are put at risk of potentially fatal water-borne diseases caused by fecal and other biological contamination.

The natural source of fresh water for Gaza is its portion of the shallow Coastal Aquifer downstream from Israel. By 1967, when Israel occupied Gaza, water extraction was already at capacity. Since then, extraction has overwhelmed natural recharge, allowing seawater from the Mediterranean to seep in along with sewage and chemical run-off.

Gaza is grossly overpopulated relative to resources due to the massive influx of refugees from other parts of Palestine (3/4 of Gaza's

nearly 2 million people are refugee families). Water usage is now four times the rate of natural aquifer recharge.

Other main factors include: (1) poor water management, infrastructure repair and maintenance including materials and energy shortages aggravated since 2008 by the Israeli/Egyptian blockade on Gaza; (2) aquifer depletion by illegal Israeli agricultural settlements between 1967 and 2006; (3) large scale Israeli military attacks which repeatedly devastate the water/sewer infrastructure, prevent repairs and hinder construction and/or operation of desalination plants; and (4) disputes between Hamas, the Palestinian Authority and Israel over electricity which also cripples the water/sewage system.

Ultimately solving the water crisis in Gaza requires lifting the siege and finding a just and permanent resolution of the conflict that addresses all these issues. It requires a U.S. policy change from spending our tax dollars in support of the devastation of Gaza to meeting human needs.

**But the children cannot wait.  
Please help us help them now.**

