

Jordan: Gov't unveils JD12 million emergency water plan

AMMAN - The Ministry of Water and Irrigation Ministry of Water and Irrigation announced on Sunday a JD12-million emergency plan to address an expected water shortage due to a disappointing rainy season.

The emergency plan, unveiled by Minister of Water and Irrigation Mohammad Najjar in a press conference yesterday, entails expediting work to transfer water from the Mujib Dam to the Zara Maeen Water Treatment Plant as well as the rehabilitation of deteriorating water networks across the country.

The minister said the current storage levels at the country's dams are "worrisome", adding that he expects the capital, the northern region and the Zarqa and Balqa governorates to be the areas hardest hit by the delay in rainfall.

Some 40 per cent of the capital's water is generated from the treatment of water from the King Abdullah Canal, he said, underscoring that a poor rainy season will reduce the canal's water flow.

"We expect water amounts to be less than last year... we must secure at least an additional 10 million cubic metres (mcm) of water, which is equal to half of the long-term annual average, to meet the capital's needs," Najjar said.

Under the emergency plan, up to 5mcm will be secured through the treatment of water from the Mujib Dam at the Zara Maeen plant, while the remaining will be generated from projects designed to reduce water-loss, he added.

Also as part of the plan, water shortages in the northern governorates will be addressed by resuming pumping from [Water Authority of Jordan \(WAJ\)](#)-owned wells in the area.

The [WAJ](#) will support the emergency plan with JD7 million, while the government has recently supplied the ministry with an additional JD5 million to implement the initiative, according to Najjar.

As part of its preparations for next summer, the ministry has also provided the National Power Company with maps of public water stations and pumps in order to avoid power cuts in the areas, Najjar added.

He stressed that the water distribution programme, under which households receive water once during a set period, usually once a week, will not be affected by the lack of rains, pointing out that water-intensive summer crops will be banned in the Jordan Valley next year.

Meanwhile, Najjar said a tender for the construction of the 6mcm Kufranjah Dam in Ajloun will be floated in early 2011, with construction slated to commence later that year.

