

## **Investigation 2: The Euphrates Water Crisis**

**Title: River of Death: How Corruption Turned Babylon's Lifeline into a Conduit for Cancer**

**By: "Euphrates Watcher"**

In a province bisected by the Euphrates River, people are dying of thirst or from the very water they drink. Babylon's water crisis is no longer an issue of resource scarcity; it is a public health and national security catastrophe. When the province's hospitals register **1,042** new cases of kidney failure in a single year, and World Health Organization analyses reveal that **73%** of water samples in rural villages are bacterially contaminated, we are not talking about a service crisis. We are talking about the slow, systematic poisoning of a population.

The official numbers are horrifying, but the reality is worse. The 2023 report from the Babylon Environment Directorate mentions **17** major industrial and sewage outfalls discharging into the river without treatment. Our field investigation, using TDS (Total Dissolved Solids) meters, uncovered **48** unlisted secondary outfalls, most belonging to poultry farms and small factories owned by influential parties who ignore environmental warnings.

The testimony of "Abu Zahraa" about his son's kidney failure is a cry in the wilderness. We analyzed data from three hospitals in Hilla and al-Mahawil and found a clear geographic pattern: **80%** of new kidney failure cases are

concentrated in villages located directly downstream from heavy water discharge points. This is not a coincidence; it is a clear causal link that officials are ignoring.

The greatest disaster lies within the treatment plants themselves. A leaked efficiency report we obtained reveals that the "al-Abbasiya" water purification plant, meant to serve 200,000 people, is operating at only **38%** capacity. The reason is not just aging equipment, but the use of expired chlorine disinfectants purchased through corrupt contracts. This leads to a chemical reaction that produces carcinogenic compounds instead of purifying the water.

The booming trade of water tankers in Babylon, where a tanker's price has reached **25,000 IQD**, is not just an alternative solution; it is the direct result of a deliberate policy to cripple the public water sector. Someone is profiting from the people's thirst and sickness. Providing clean water in Babylon does not require a miracle; it requires the political will to hold accountable the corrupt network that controls maintenance contracts and chemical supplies, and that turns a blind eye to the sources of pollution.