

America is a Third World Country for those who have to pay for Water that is too Polluted to Drink or Bathe in

News:

The *Washington Post* and *TIME* Magazine both reported on the 12th April 2016, that the water of Flint, Michigan in the US is still unsafe to drink after two years of contamination with Lead, which is a devastating poison that damages the brain. The city of 100,000 residents have been told officially that they can now drink the water, but are advised to use filters to protect them from particles of lead that are still present in the water. A recent study by a US university, Virginia Tech, concluded that "All Flint residents should continue to use bottled water, or Flint water passed through a lead filter, for cooking or drinking until further notice."

Comment:

The people of Flint have been exposed to lead poisoning because the water authority chose to take switch water sources to a cheaper option in April of 2014, which resulted in corrosion of the lead pipes through which the water flowed due to improper water treatment. In addition to incompetence is added criminal neglect, because the US Environmental Protection Agency discovered the problem and informed the state government who ignored the warnings. The hospitals have recorded massively elevated levels of lead in the blood of residents of Flint and the water in some houses contains thousands of times the accepted level of lead. In fact, the water is so dangerous that not only is it unsafe to drink; it is unsafe even to bathe in. Nevertheless, the residents are paying an average of \$864 a year for water that is poisoning them. Now that the people of Flint have been made aware of the problem, the accusations and apportioning of blame between the state authorities and the Environmental Protection Agency is occurring and President Obama has stepped in to say how sorry he feels about it, but the people are still paying for poisoned water and they are not alone.

Virginia Tech engineering professor Marc Edwards told the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform in March that, "EPA and other agencies caused a similar lead-and-water crisis in Washington, D.C. from 2001 to 2004," and that "They completely covered that up for six years and wrote falsified scientific reports. And it created a climate in which anything goes across the United States, anything at all to cover up health harm from lead in drinking water." According to Professor Edwards, "the long-term health impact of lead-tainted water in the nation's capitol will be '20-30 times worse' than what's happened in Flint." Six times as many people were exposed, for twice as long as the people of Flint, to lead three times the level measured in Flint. If these are the conditions that Americans suffer, even in their capitol city, then America is a third world country as far as its citizens are concerned, despite the fact that most of the world's wealth is in America's hands.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
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