

A photograph showing several people in an outdoor setting, likely a public water supply point in Lagos. In the foreground, a woman in a patterned dress carries a large black plastic basin on her head, with water dripping from a tap into it. Next to her, another woman in a colorful geometric-patterned dress also carries a black basin. To the right, a young boy carries a light blue plastic bucket on his head. Other people are visible in the background, some also carrying containers. The scene is set against a bright orange and yellow background.

# **HOW ACUTE WATER SHORTAGE MAY JEOPARDIZE COVID-19 RESPONSE IN LAGOS**

## **WATER & COVID-19**



**Corporate  
Accountability &  
Public  
Participation  
Africa**

# Special Report #001 June , 2020

**HOW ACUTE  
WATER SHORTAGE  
MAY JEOPARDIZE COVID-19  
RESPONSE IN LAGOS**



## **Residents now rely on unsafe water sources**

**Period of Investigation:** March 20, 2020 - June 24, 2020.

**Field Monitors:** Philip Jakpor, Olatunji Buhari & Aderonke Ige

**Photos:** Olalekan Fagbenro

### **Highlights:**

- \* Most of the waterworks in Lagos are functioning epileptically and far below installed capacity
- \* Some of the waterworks are completely shut.
- \* There is a growing apprehension among Lagos residents over water shortages

Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Health confirmed the first coronavirus (COVID-19) case in Lagos State on the 27th of February 2020. On arrival from Milan, Italy, the index case reportedly travelled through Lagos, a city of 21 million people, and visited nearby Ogun state, engaging with several people for almost two days before he started experiencing symptoms that made him check into a private hospital. He was subsequently tracked and isolated.

The Lagos government also began to trace everyone who arrived Nigeria with the Italian on the same flight, and the places he visited before going to the hospital. As the state government was progressing with the identification of individuals the index case made contacts with, unrelated cases also started popping up in different parts of the state. This development set the stage for the states partial lock-down which Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu announced on March 24, 2020.

A week after, the Federal Government, heeded advice from the Federal Ministry of Health by announcing a total lockdown of Lagos, Ogun and Abuja, starting March 31, 2020 through April 13, 2020 in the first phase. At the end of that phase, the confirmed cases in the country had jumped to 131. Of this number, 81 were in Lagos alone. This situation compelled the Federal Government to extend the lockdown of Lagos, Ogun states and Abuja for another 14 days starting April 14.

In Lagos the lockdown was matched with government-sponsored public health messages broadcast on radio and television, asking residents to stay at home and maintain a high sense of hygiene by regular washing of the hands with water and soap.

With a firm knowledge of the acute water situation in most of Lagos communities, CAPPA on March 23, 2020 decided to conduct on-the-spot assessment of the waterworks in Lagos to ascertain the status of water production and distribution at the most critical time of need for Lagos residents. The information on the level of water production covered the period between March 20, and June 24, and was gleaned from observation and information from dependable sources.

## **FACT-FINDING VISITS**

CAPPA field monitors visited the following waterworks in Lagos State: Adiyen, Akilo-Ogba, Badagry, Bariga, Epe, Iju, Iponri, Ishasi, Lekki, Shasha, Surulere, Shomolu and the Ijora Headquarters of the Lagos Water Corporation (LWC) to ascertain if they were working. Combined, the identified waterworks cut across 11 local governments in Lagos, and should be providing as much as 137.6million gallons of water per day (MGD) for residents. The waterworks are spread across low, middle- and high-income areas of the state.

The findings showed that none of the waterworks visited are currently working optimally and producing up to their installed capacity.

## **BREAKDOWN:**

**ADIYAN** which ideally has an installed capacity of 70 MGD only produced as much as 23.33 MGD (its highest within this period) on April 14. Production has declined to 14.56 MGD as at April 16.



**Information Gathered:** The reason for the failure of the waterworks to meet its target are linked to engine challenges, technical hitches, gas outage and unavailable power to pump fresh water.

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**IJU** with an installed capacity of 45 MGD only produced as much as 6.87 MGD on March 20<sup>th</sup>. Production declined to 4.3 MGD as at April 16.

**Information Gathered:** Between March 20, and April 16, only one clear water pump was available with lot of waste on the pipes and valves. The second pump could not be used. There was also reported low pressure with the gas necessitating emergency action plan for restoration of pumps. As at April 16 the technical hitches were yet to be resolved



\* Overgrown with weeds and dilapidated structures

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**ISASHI** with installed capacity of 4MGD only produced as much as 2.2 MGD on April 9. Production has declined to 0.95MGD as at April 16.

**Information Gathered:** There was a major cable rupture at the intake of raw water. It was still receiving attention but yet to be completed as at the time of this report. One raw water pump was revived tentatively but it is not economically viable. Constant power outage is a regular feature at the waterworks.

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**BADAGRY** has installed capacity of 2MGD

**Information Gathered:**

The Badagry waterworks which was noticeably overgrown with weeds was not producing when the team visited on June 24. The officials of the LWC on site claimed there has been no production since 2018 but residents the team spoke with, countered this and insisted that the waterworks has not functioned for the last 15years.

The CAPPA team gathered that the major challenges of the waterworks are bad production panel and faulty generating plant. Other challenges are lack of chemicals and shortage of staff.

When asked if the government was aware of the situation, they answered in the affirmative.



\* Badagry Waterworks



\* Overgrown with weeds and dilapidated structures

**IKOSI** waterworks with 4MGD installed capacity has produced no single drop of water throughout the period under review.

**Information Gathered:** Between March 20, and April 16, diesel was not available to power the plant. The generator which was due for servicing had not been serviced. Production halted.

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**SHASHA** waterworks was built to produce 2.4MGD

**Information Gathered:** The facility has not produced a single drop of water for the past 10 years. The vast office space is currently taken up by cars owned by residents living within the vicinity. Only security personnel were in the premises responding to enquiries



*\*Shasha waterworks open only for cars to park*

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**SURULERE-ITIRE** which has an installed capacity of 2.4 MGD

**Information Gathered:** No production was going on as at the time of visit. A second round of visit was carried out on May 12. The situation was the same.

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*\*Surulere/Itire waterworks shut*

**EPE** with an installed capacity of 3MGD

**Information Gathered:** It was not operational as at the time of the visit on April 16. It was gathered that the situation has been so for upwards of two months prior to the Covid-19 lock-down in the state.



*\*Epe Mini Waterworks Shut*

**LEKKI** has capacity for 1MGD

**Information Gathered:** The Lekki waterworks located in the high-brow part of Lagos State was not producing when the team visited on April 16. However, the security personnel on ground said production has not stopped. Some locals the team spoke with corroborated that they have had water regularly.



*\* Lekki mini waterworks*

**AKILO-OGBA** has a capacity of 1 MGD.

**Information Gathered:** Production only stalls when there is no power. When the team visited on April 17, there was water flowing from the tap inside the premises.



*\* Inside Akilo mini waterworks*



**SHOMOLU** has capacity for 1.8MGD

**Information Gathered:** When the CAPPA team visited on May 12, no production was ongoing. Staff blamed the situation on regular power outage



\*The shut gate of Shomolu waterworks

**IPONRI** has capacity of 1MGD

**Information Gathered:** When the team visited on May 12 production was not on. Staff working at the facility said the storage tank was bad and yet to be replaced.



\*Faulty storage tank at Iponri waterworks

# Community People React

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The dire water situation documented by the CAPPA team is already causing apprehension among Lagos residents who fear that in the course of sourcing for water from unwholesome sources they may be exposed to the coronavirus and other ailments.

Residents living near the headquarters of the LWC in Ijora did not fare better. Most of those the team spoke with lamented the failure of the Corporation to provide them some succour at a time of great need. They wonder the essence of the messages passed in the media urging residents to wash their hands with running water regularly when in actual fact they, who live close to the waterworks headquarters cannot get running water. They say they are like people who live by the river side and yet wash their hands with spittle.

◀ Children walk long distances to get water

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Private water vendors plying their trade

## Their Testimonies

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*There is no water. In fact, the bad quality of water we have been consuming and using to cook can even cause diseases. It is unfortunate that despite the fact that we live very close to the Corporation they cannot even provide us some buckets of water as a form of palliative. Whenever we go to their gate, they will chase us away. Their attitude towards us has worsened since they tried to force their prepaid meter on us and we refused. In the last seven years we have been passing through hell*  
- **Mama Georgina, Ijora Community**

*I am a product of Lagos State Water Corporation for almost 35years, I formerly lived at Surulere before relocating to Ikorodu, and I can confidently say that back then we had functioning water not epileptic water. I was really surprised on getting to Ikorodu, I discovered that there is no existing synergy between the local government and the water corporation*  
- **Melakin Peters, Ijede Community**





*There are two waterworks here in Epe but none is functioning. There are also public boreholes and none is functioning. If the government is telling us to avoid gatherings and we have to queue and fight each other to get water, tell me how we can avoid getting the coronavirus. Even where we get the water in the river you will meet people having their bath there. Yet, this is the water we have to take home.*

**- Onibudo Kehinde, Epe Community**

*Right now, in my area the water we use is not from the government but we have some publicly installed boreholes. The major issue apart from the inadequate water is power outage. People are even ready to allow others fetch water from their apartments but when there is no electricity, those who have water will want to preserve the little they have*

**- Peter Okoh, Oge Valley Oke-Eletu**

**STATUS OF ACCESS TO WATER IN LAGOS DURING COVID-19 CRISIS, 2020**

Local Government	Water Facility	Installed Capacity Million Gallon Daily (MGD)	Current Production	Production report Date	Observation / Challenge
Surulere	Iponri water works	1MGD	0.00MGD	12th May	Not producing because the tank is bad
Shomolu	Shomolu	1.8MGD	0.00MGD	12th May	No production as at the time of visit. Staff blamed lack of electricity.
Alimosho	Shasha Waterworks	2.4MGD	0.00MGD	14th April	Gates open for cars from outside to park but waterworks itself shutdown nearly 10 years
Eti-Osa	Lekki Water Corporation	1MGD	Not known	18th April	There was no official on site, gate was slightly opened. The gatekeeper said they produce everyday but as at the time of visit no production was on going
Epe	Epe Mini-water works	3MGD	0.00MGD	16th April	No sign of production. Gates shut and community people say they have no water
Ikeja	Akilo/Ogba waterwork	1MGD	Not known	17th April	Very minimal production ongoing. The duty officer said the production is only stalled when there is no electricity
Surulere	Surulere / Itire w/wrks	2.4MGD	0.00MGD	15th April and 12th of May	Not open for work or inspection. Only gateman was present and no sign of production or activities.
Ifo	Adiyan w/works	70MGD	14.56MGD	16th April	Technical hitch
Ifako-Ijaiye	Iju w/works	45MGD	4.3MGD	16th April	Technical hitch
Ojo	Isashi w/works	4MGD	0.95MGD	16th April	Cable ruptured at the intake pending
Kosofe / Otta	Otta- ikosi w/works	4MGD	0.00MGD	16th April	Diesel fuel exhausted and Generator overdue for service, Production halted.
Ifo	Adiyan w/works	70MGD	17.82MGD	15th April	2nd Raw water pump for test run today
Ifako-Ijaiye	Iju w/works	45MGD	4.7MGD	15th April	
Ojo	Isashi w/works	4MGD	1.2MGD	15th April	Cable ruptured at the intake pending
Kosofe / Otta	Otta- ikosi w/works	4MGD	0.00MGD	15th April	Diesel fuel exhausted and Generator overdue for service, Production halted.
Ifo	Adiyan w/works	70MGD	23.33MGD	14th April	2nd Raw water pump about to come up but hindered by non-availability power
Ifako-Ijaiye	Iju w/works	45MGD	0.75MGD	14th April	2nd Clearwater pump receiving attention is yet to come up.
Ojo	Isashi w/works	4MGD	0.00MGD	14th April	24Hrs power outage (cable ruptured at the intake pending)
Kosofe / Otta	Otta- ikosi w/works	4MGD	0.00MGD	14th April	Diesel fuel exhausted and Generator overdue for service, Production halted.
Badagry	Badagry w/works	2MGD	0.00MGD	24th June	Bad production panel, Faulty generating plant, Lack of chemicals, Shortage of staff

## CAPPA Recommends the following:

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- Lagos State Government should declare a state of emergency in the water sector
- Lagos State Government should integrate broad public participation in developing plans to achieve universal access to clean water in the state
- Lagos State Government should institute a probe into the N1.6 billion released for rehabilitation of the 48 mini and macro waterworks in the State under the Mr. Akinwunmi Ambode administration was spent. Also, probe of water contracts in previous administrations since 1999 should be undertaken.
- Lagos State Government should reject all forms of water privatization and commodification.
- Lagos State Government should fully uphold the human right to water as an obligation of the government, representing the people.
- Lagos State Government should build the political will to prioritize water for citizens, leading to a comprehensive plan that invests in water infrastructure necessary to provide universal water access, jobs, improved public health, and invigoration of the Lagos economy.







# *Community. Solidarity. Impact*

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