



↑ A couple wearing coronavirus masks walks near a food joint.
John Varughese / Gulf Today

Academics push for greater water management

DUBAI

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Three academics from the UK said even the First World must continually pursue and neither abandon nor neglect projects that ensure the availability of clean and safe water for all.

The three are from the University of Birmingham-School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences: Ecohydrology and Biogeochemistry Prof. Stefan Krause, College of Life and Environmental Sciences-Research director/United Nations Education Scientific, Cultural Organisation chairperson/Hydrology Prof. David M. Hannah, and Environmental Nanosciences Prof. Iseult Lynch. They jointly authored "How Can Handwashing Protect From COVID19 When You're Short of Water?", a copy of which was emailed to Gulf Today.

Citing the UN Sustainable Development Goal Number 6 which is "To ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all," Krause, Hannah and Lynch stated that water is a "basic human right" which the Novel Coronavirus (COVID19) has clearly demonstrated for, "clean water allows good hand hygiene and is, of course,

also vital for drinking and preparing food."

They are on the same page as with KWR Water Institute (The Netherlands) chief executive officer Prof. Dragan Savic on the indispensability of water and the need to invest in Water Science and Water Engineering.

They wrote, "We must invest now in water infrastructure and water governance-that (is) to say the way water is managed and provisioned."

Savic, earlier interviewed, said Water Sciences and Water Engineering which he has specialised in, "are important for human existence and so governments and private institutions need to invest in both of them if we want to have enough, high-quality water for human consumption, growing food, energy generation and various other activities on water."

Implying that water is life and that everyone needs clean and potable water, Savic believes that everyone must collectively act on the protection, preservation and conservation of all water resources as "the other risk to water are the resources available to treat (it) to po-

table quality." Based on their observational data and research, Krause, Hannah and Lynch pointed out "water insecurity and limited opportunities for sanitation and hygiene (being part of daily life) across the planet."

They claimed that two of five people reside in "arid and semi-arid" regions where water resources are scarce. They said that "at an increased risk from COVID19" are an estimated three billion people from the low to middle income countries or the Third World/developing states which "(have lacked) basic handwashing facilities with soap and water at home," based on the UN 2017 global records.

Krause, Hannah and Lynch also wrote: "Water may be supplied, but too expensive, too inaccessible or too polluted for hygiene. Limited access to adequate sanitation becomes an increasing problem in high income countries."

They illustrated this by referring to the US, where they claimed, live 15 million who "are without access to water as they cannot afford their water bills."

They went on to say that "In many Western societies, in particular, poor people being forced to use communal and shared public facilities (which have put) them at extra risk (against COVID19)."

For his part, Savic said COVID19 has raised public awareness on the essentiality of water services that also includes wastewater services; which he said, must be part of continuing discussions and engagements: "Access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene was seen as they key for protecting health."

He replied in the negative when asked on the possible complete depletion of water across the globe as numerous research and publications have indicated since the late 1970s and the reverberation on climate change: "But it may be that we will not have enough water where it is needed (like its) unequal spatial distribution and not enough water when it is needed like in the dry season as opposed to the wet season."

Mariecar Jara-Puyod, Senior Reporter