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Syria's Climate Strategy

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After a devastating fourteen-year civil war, Syria faces severe climate and environmental challenges, including prolonged droughts, water and food scarcity, and limited institutional capacity for mitigation and adaptation. Today, the new government has a unique opportunity to learn from past mistakes and leverage incoming reconstruction investments to implement a comprehensive strategy that embeds climate action at the center of Syria's recovery and development agenda.

Syria's Challenges

- The civil war exacerbated successive multi-year droughts, severely damaging or destroying vulnerable natural areas and decimating agricultural output.
- Water scarcity, significantly worsened by Türkiye's actions in damming the Euphrates River, and food scarcity have driven thousands of internally displaced Syrians to urban centers, further straining infrastructure.
- Climate change has historically been treated as secondary to security matters, so Syria possesses limited human and technological capital for effective execution of mitigation and adaptation strategies.
- While different ministries have formulated mitigation and adaptation policies, these policies frequently lack specific timelines for execution or emission reduction, and many suffer from severe compliance issues and ineffective enforcement.
- There is a lack of transparency and accountability in climate governance, such as the government- and elite-controlled monopoly on electricity and property preventing efficient energy distribution.
- With Syria's plans to rebound economically, greenhouse gas emissions are expected to increase in the next few years, especially if the hydrocarbon power plants start functioning at full capacity again and industrial manufacturing activities return.

See full article and sources:
Joy Arkeh and Adam Kinder, "Building Climate-Resilient Systems in Post-War Syria," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, November 21, 2025, https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2025/11/building-climate-resilient-systems-in-post-war-syria?lang=en.

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Syria's Opportunities

- Organizing agricultural production based on land-use maps and crop rotations can promote sustainable agriculture and rehabilitate degraded pastures.
- Recycling agricultural waste for alternative energy and managing forests sustainably, including reforestation and fire management, can enhance carbon sequestration.
- Adopting renewable efficiency power sources and water harvesting will modernize irrigation systems.
- Updating transport systems by improving vehicle inspections and rehabilitating railways will be necessary to promote a greener public transport system.
- Utilizing initiatives like the Agrarian Research Centre and allocating funds from the ministry's budget for drought mitigation demonstrates a willingness to address climate issues that can be expanded upon.
- Syria's climate is ideal for solar and wind plants, expanding potential for the integration of renewable energy sources into both the power grid and agricultural activities.
- Building human resource capacities and training in agriculture strengthens adaptation and resilience.

Policy Recommendations

- Integrate a coherent climate strategy into governance by embedding it in the March 2025 Constitutional Declaration.
- Update Syria's Nationally Developed Contribution to reflect the new government's strategy regarding climate change.
- Introduce explicit funding mechanisms and compliance verification channels into climate policies to strengthen transparency and prevent corruption.
- Increase budgetary allocations to key ministries such as MAAR, the Ministry of Energy, and the Ministry of Local Administration and the Environment to support sustainable industry, diversify resource exploitation and distribution systems, and build resilience.
- Prioritize reconstruction projects that commit to environmental sustainability and minimize the exploitation of vulnerable habitats.
- Establish clear short- and long-term timelines for emission reduction and enforce policies with robust compliance mechanisms, both for the central government and for private firms, especially in public-private partnerships.
- Foster multi-level collaboration by involving local representatives and non-governmental organizations, including international organizations, in policymaking and implementation.
- Invest in research, training, and environmental education to strengthen human, technological, and financial capacity for sustainability and food security.
- Nominate committees spanning different ministries to craft a holistic approach to addressing energy, water, agriculture, environment, and transportation issues concurrently.

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