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Palestine's Climate Strategy

Joy Arkeh and Nabil Nasser

Palestine faces some of the most severe climate vulnerabilities in the region despite contributing minimally to global greenhouse gas emissions. The already semiarid climate is growing hotter and drier, and declining precipitation and shrinking water access are compounding existing pressures on food, energy, and public health systems. These challenges are further constrained by Israeli occupation, which limits Palestinian control over land, water, and infrastructure, narrowing the space for meaningful climate action. While Palestine has developed a national climate strategy through its updated Nationally Determined Contribution and National Adaptation Plan, translating policy into implementation remains the central challenge.

Palestine's Challenges

- Only one in ten Gazans have access to potable water, and Israel controls approximately 80 percent of shared water resources, leaving Palestinian communities with severely limited water availability and quality.
- Around 80 percent of Palestine's agricultural sector is rain-fed; these farmers are acutely exposed to droughts and desertification, while settlement expansion and mobility restrictions further reduce access to arable land.
- Palestine imports the vast majority of its electricity from Israel, so its energy supply largely dependent on externally set tariffs and constraining domestic renewable expansion.
- Climate governance is institutionally structured but weak in implementation: Only 20 percent of climate laws include adaptation provisions, and most lack binding targets or dedicated financing.
- The Environment Quality Authority, the body that is most directly responsible for climate policy, consistently receives the lowest share of public funding of all ministries.
- The ongoing war in Gaza has collapsed development spending and eliminated near-term prospects for climate investment and reconstruction.

See full article and sources:

Joy Arkeh and Nabil Nasser, "Palestine's Climate Change Planning Faces Its Limit," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May 14, 2025, <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2026/05/palestines-climate-change-planning-faces-its-limits>.

Joy Arkeh is a research assistant in the Middle East Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Nabil Nasser was a research intern in the Middle East Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Palestine's Opportunities

- [High solar radiation levels](#) make decentralized solar a viable and immediate alternative to imported electricity.
- Reconstruction presents a generational opportunity to build climate-resilient systems from the ground up.
- Access to multilateral climate finance mechanisms creates a concrete avenue to close the climate financing gap and tie reconstruction aid to resilience goals.
- The Ministry of Agriculture's sustained public funding provides an institutional base to scale climate-smart agriculture across both territories.
- Growing recognition of the link between the occupation and climate vulnerability creates an opening to integrate climate justice into international advocacy and donor programming.

Policy Recommendations

Palestinian agencies should:

- Embed climate adaptation targets into binding legislation, with enforceable deadlines and clearly assigned institutional responsibilities across water, agriculture, and energy sectors.
- Increase budgetary allocations to the Environment Quality Authority to enable integrated, cross-sectoral climate governance.
- Prioritize decentralized renewable energy deployment, particularly solar, to reduce dependence on imported Israeli electricity and build local energy resilience.
- Direct reconstruction investment in Gaza toward climate-resilient infrastructure, making environmental sustainability a condition of international funding rather than an afterthought.
- Introduce dedicated financing mechanisms and compliance verification into climate laws to strengthen transparency and close the climate financing gap.
- Update Palestine's Nationally Determined Contribution and National Adaptation Plan to reflect current conditions on the ground, including the war's impact on emissions trajectories and adaptation capacity.
- Nominate cross-ministerial committees and mandate participation from local communities, civil society, and the private sector to shift climate governance toward a more integrated and inclusive model.

However, internationally, sustained climate action in Palestine is ultimately contingent on ending the war and lifting occupation-related restrictions on land, resources, and infrastructure, without which even the most well-designed climate strategies will remain difficult to realize.



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