



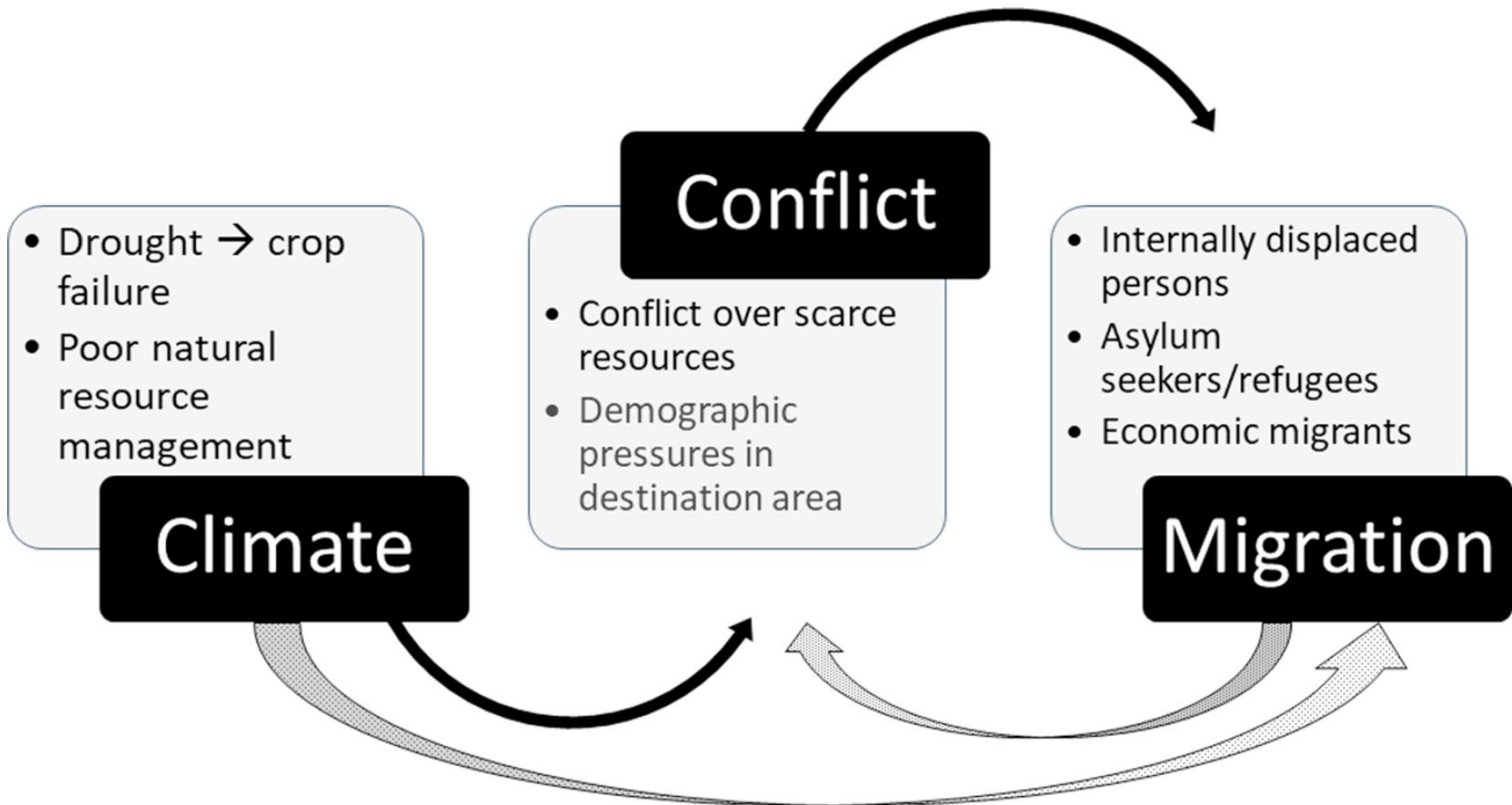
Climate Change and Conflict in Israel

חיים וסביבה



Political Tensions

- Climate change in the Middle East will lead to an increase number of African and Middle Eastern refugees seeking asylum, leading to two outlooks- If they are granted asylum, some argue that this will create an influx of too many migrants from Africa. If their requests for asylum are rejected, some argue human rights will be violated, and their lives will be jeopardized. Democracy will be impacted, as these two differing viewpoints will become more extreme and out of touch with the other.
- Food scarcity and water scarcity will create more displaced people in the Middle East, sparking wars and providing opportunities and increased support for extremist groups who may offer viable alternatives (7-10 million people in the Middle East and North Africa will be forced to leave their homes over the next decade).
- Food and fuel insecurity can very quickly lead to unrest. Israel imports 90% of its grains and legumes, and is therefore dependent on their affordability and availability in breadbasket nations.



Political Instability

- Climate change will likely make Middle Eastern governments less capable of handling unrest. More frequent extreme weather events increase the need of emergency relief, and the funds to pay for them. The government may have no choice but to deal with extreme weather events, with little say from the population in this decision making. Those not being aided will protest and many will not be compensated for damages.
- Resource scarcity within a country can provoke nationwide unrest. Competition over transboundary resources can elevate this to even higher levels.
- When environmental conditions converge with political and economic ones, stability and security are in great jeopardy.
- The challenges of water and energy security and their links to ongoing and future climate change will risk the reinforcement of existing social inequalities.

Israeli-Palestinian Instability

- Within Israel it is highly unlikely that citizens will feel the direct effects of climate change in regards to water availability, as Israel has already embarked on an extensive desalination program. However, neighboring countries and Palestinian territories will.
- Gaza requires additional water regardless of climate change. It is virtually impossible to supply even normative domestic needs without desalination, but the ability to desalinate in Gaza is curtailed by the politics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
- However, framing water as a security issue may adversely affect the readiness of the parties to take adaptive measures and may lead them to harden their negotiating positions. There may be views that mitigation measures and cooperative mechanisms impinge on sovereignty.

Public Health

- Extreme heat and cold events can lead to illness and even death.
- Temperature increase will bring an invasion of vectors, such as mosquitos.
- Lack of available drinking water can increase cases of cholera and typhoid.
- Pandemics are more likely to occur in Gaza due to its poor water conditions and shortage of water. The pandemics will either spread past the Gaza border, or those within it will likely revolt and try to leave the infested area, posing a security threat for neighboring states.
- Exacerbation of cardiovascular and respiratory diseases by air pollution.
- Water shortages that impact agriculture will cause both crop failure and an increased price of basic foods, affecting impoverished people more.
- Drought and extreme heat can create an great influx of patients in hospitals, overcrowding them and leading to a higher chance of the spreading of more serious diseases.

Politics of Climate Change

- Most Israelis believe in climate change and the need to combat it. However, most politicians do not campaign on climate issues. Many argue that Israel faces greater threats, such as national security and economic growth. However, tackling climate change can help Israel promote these key concerns by saving resources, providing energy security in an unstable region, delivering economic opportunities and high-quality jobs, and improving the overall quality of life.
- When some argue for a carbon-neutral society, others, due to the small geographic size of Israel, argue that fighting climate change will have a negligible effect globally, when countries like the United States and China continue to be great emitters of greenhouse gases.
- Even many 'left' politicians in Israel prioritize other topics, such as secularism and gender/sexual equality, over climate change. Recently, however, climate change has been discussed more.
- Nonetheless, in Israel there has been bipartisan support regarding the issue of water - 90% of sewage water is recycled and desalination plants supply 70% of domestic water consumption.
- Although Israeli water technology will be important for a world affected by climate change, it does nothing to actually reduce the emissions that are causing it.

Social Gaps within Israel

- Research by the Tel Aviv-Jaffa Municipality predicts that temperatures in the poorer south of the city will be up to seven degrees Celsius higher than in its affluent north.
- The cost of maintaining properties that are not well-designed or adequately insulated will increase, alongside the already increasing property prices in Israel. Property taxes may increase as well.
- Children, older persons, those who are already ill or are just not very strong, will be at risk of dying from excessive heat. The poorest people will often have neither access nor the money needed for such relief, through the electricity needed to power air conditioning units.
- Taxes may increase to maintain infrastructure that is either damaged during extreme weather events, or that has deteriorated rapidly due to increased temperatures (such as asphalt roads). Worse infrastructure can lead to more accidents, increasing overall healthcare expenses.

Prices

- Food prices skyrocket as a consequence of a decline in crop yields, a decline in the nutrition content of food crops, a catastrophic decline in insect populations, desertification, chronic water shortages, and conditions too hot for human habitation in significant food-growing regions. In 2018, Israeli food prices were already 19% higher than other OECD nations.
- On average, Israelis spend 25% of their gross adjusted disposable income on rent.
- Air conditioning is responsible for 10% of global electricity consumption. There are 1.2 billion room air conditioning units installed today, and by 2050 there will be 4.5 billion.

Results

- The internal cohesion of Israel will be under great stress, as a result of a dramatic rise in migration and changes in agricultural patterns and water availability.
- Armed conflict between nations over resources is likely. The social consequences range from increased religious fervor to outright chaos.
- Climate Change is a security issue in Israel and the Middle East. Dealing with climate refugees and the scarcity of resources is crucial to provide stability in the country and in the region.