# Rising temperatures linked to surge in women’s cancer rates across Middle East and North Africa



A recent study from researchers at the American University in Cairo presents alarming data suggesting that rising global temperatures are correlated with increasing rates of certain cancers in women. The research highlights a troubling trend: for every one degree Celsius increase in temperature, the incidence of breast, cervical, ovarian, and uterine cancers has risen by as much as 280 cases per 100,000 women across 17 Middle Eastern and North African countries over the past two decades. This increase in cancer incidence, particularly pronounced for ovarian cancer, is complemented by an average rise in related deaths ranging from 171 to 332 per 100,000 for each degree of warming.

This study, published in the journal *Frontiers in Public Health*, underscores a broader public health crisis, linking climate change not only to physical health challenges but also suggesting that environmental factors could exacerbate the prevalence of cancers in vulnerable populations. According to Dr. Wafa Abuelkheir Mataria, the lead researcher, the findings indicate a cumulative public health impact that demands urgent attention. Although the study did not establish direct causation, the researchers suggest potential explanations, including increased exposure to carcinogens released during extreme weather events like wildfires, which are becoming more frequent due to climate change.

The implications of this study extend beyond the Middle Eastern context, with parallels observed in the United States and the United Kingdom, where cancer rates among women have also escalated. In the U.S., for example, breast cancer diagnoses have increased by about one per cent annually since 2012. Similarly, uterine cancer prevalence has also shown a steady rise, affecting tens of thousands of women each year. The World Health Organisation estimates that breast cancer deaths in the UK could surpass 17,000 by 2050 unless significant interventions are made.

Furthermore, severe disparities exist in access to healthcare, particularly for marginalized groups, leading to higher risks of late diagnoses and poor outcomes. Dr. Sungsoo Chun, a co-author of the study, emphasised that women are particularly vulnerable to climate-related health risks during physiologically sensitive times, such as pregnancy and menopause. The study calls for amplified focus on screening programs and preventative measures, particularly in regions susceptible to climate change effects, as ongoing neglect could worsen these health outcomes.

The current political landscape is also influencing the fight against climate change. The Trump administration has been publicly sceptical of climate science, dismantling previously established regulations aimed at mitigating environmental impact and potentially heightening the public health crisis related to cancer. For instance, a proposal from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency seeks to roll back regulations on greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel power plants, contradicting empirical evidence linking fossil fuels to global warming and its health effects.

Despite the controversial decisions made in the previous administration, many experts hold out hope for advancements in public health informed by careful research and data. As the need for robust climate policies grows ever more critical, the intersection of climate change and health continues to gather urgent attention. The evidence presented by the Cairo study adds to a rising chorus of calls for a comprehensive approach that not only addresses climate change but also prioritises the health of populations disproportionately impacted by its consequences.

In light of these findings, it becomes crucial to acknowledge the potential long-term health ramifications of climate change. Without proactive measures to address both environmental and public health crises, the risk of increased cancer rates could persist, aggravating existing inequalities and threatening the well-being of countless individuals.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14750663/doctors-warn-cancer-rates-donald-trump-climate-change.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14750663/doctors-warn-cancer-rates-donald-trump-climate-change.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/climate-energy/documents-show-us-epa-wants-erase-greenhouse-gas-limits-power-plants-nyt-reports-2025-05-24/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14750663/doctors-warn-cancer-rates-donald-trump-climate-change.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.apnews.com/article/3d61818ecc3ca951dc7df3420cbe1e71), [[6]](https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/cop/trump-administration-dismisses-all-authors-key-climate-report-email-says-2025-04-28/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[5]](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/environment/article/2024/11/07/donald-trump-s-election-is-a-dark-day-for-the-climate_6732013_114.html)
* Paragraph 5 – [[4]](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2024/01/trump-climate-change-denial-paris-agreement/676125/?utm_source=apple_news), [[7]](https://www.apnews.com/article/a76d2e2d3dfec7318b124b05a78d1ee1)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14750663/doctors-warn-cancer-rates-donald-trump-climate-change.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/climate-energy/documents-show-us-epa-wants-erase-greenhouse-gas-limits-power-plants-nyt-reports-2025-05-24/), [[3]](https://www.apnews.com/article/3d61818ecc3ca951dc7df3420cbe1e71)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14750663/doctors-warn-cancer-rates-donald-trump-climate-change.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/climate-energy/documents-show-us-epa-wants-erase-greenhouse-gas-limits-power-plants-nyt-reports-2025-05-24/> - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has drafted a proposal to eliminate all regulations limiting greenhouse gas emissions from coal and gas-fired power plants. The EPA argues that emissions from these facilities represent a small, declining share of global emissions and do not significantly harm public health or contribute to climate change. This position contradicts data from the United Nations, which identifies fossil fuels as the primary contributors to global warming. In response to the NYT report, the EPA stated it is in the process of developing a proposed rule, which will be open to public comment following interagency review. This regulatory rollback aligns with broader Trump administration policies aimed at dismantling climate change initiatives, including the cancellation of green energy subsidies and environmental grants established under President Biden. The EPA submitted the draft for White House review on May 2, with a formal release and public input phase expected in June.
3. <https://www.apnews.com/article/3d61818ecc3ca951dc7df3420cbe1e71> - At a contentious Senate hearing, EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin faced fierce criticism from Democratic senators over President Trump's proposal to cut the Environmental Protection Agency’s budget by 55%. Zeldin, defending the budget cuts and his deregulatory agenda, claims the measures will boost the economy while maintaining air and water quality. However, Democrats, including Senators Adam Schiff and Sheldon Whitehouse, sharply disagreed, warning the cuts would lead to more pollution, toxic water, and increased cancer rates. Schiff accused Zeldin of negligence, stating that slashing the EPA’s budget equates to disregarding environmental health. Zeldin responded dismissively, calling the senator an "aspiring fiction writer" and dismissing the critiques as political. Key issues included the cancellation of $2 billion in Biden-era environmental grants and the rollback of pollution regulations, particularly those affecting marginalized communities. Whitehouse questioned the legitimacy of Zeldin’s review of canceled grants and criticized the firing of career officials and deployment of federal agents under Zeldin's tenure. Legal challenges are ongoing, with DOJ lawyers denying fraud allegations tied to the grant terminations. The hearing underscored profound partisan divisions on environmental policy and public health.
4. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2024/01/trump-climate-change-denial-paris-agreement/676125/?utm_source=apple_news> - The article examines the potential consequences of a Donald Trump re-election in 2024 on climate change policies. During Trump's first term, significant climate data was removed from government websites, climate science pages were taken down, and efforts to address climate change were largely ignored. Should Trump win again, the article predicts a similar strategy of denying climate change and diminishing US involvement in international climate agreements, like the Paris Agreement. On the domestic front, progress on climate-friendly technologies and policies, such as electric vehicles and the Inflation Reduction Act, may face obstacles from the fossil fuel lobby and conservative groups. The Environmental Protection Agency is particularly vulnerable to budget cuts and reduced enforcement. The article calls attention to the importance of safeguarding climate data on private servers to prevent its erasure by the government.
5. <https://www.lemonde.fr/en/environment/article/2024/11/07/donald-trump-s-election-is-a-dark-day-for-the-climate_6732013_114.html> - Donald Trump's re-election as US President has been perceived as a severe setback in the battle against climate change. With COP29 just days away, experts fear Trump’s policies could significantly derail both American and global climate efforts. Trump, a known climate skeptic, aims to increase oil and gas production, reduce environmental protections, and repeal pro-climate policies like the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), threatening the progress made under Biden’s presidency. His plans could greatly elevate the US's greenhouse gas emissions and possibly lead to the nation’s second withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, creating substantial global impacts. Despite these concerns, there is a belief that the momentum for environmental transition, driven by economic interests and state-level policies, might still endure, albeit facing significant challenges.
6. <https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/cop/trump-administration-dismisses-all-authors-key-climate-report-email-says-2025-04-28/> - The Trump administration has dismissed all nearly 400 contributors to the sixth National Climate Assessment (NCA6), a key federal report designed to guide governmental climate change preparedness. This move, revealed in an internal email obtained by Reuters, casts doubt on the future of the Congressionally mandated, peer-reviewed study, which is scheduled for release in 2028. The assessment, overseen by the Global Change Research Program (also recently dismissed), involved input from 14 federal agencies and hundreds of scientists. It has historically guided policy decisions on climate and funding. The most recent report in 2023 highlighted rising costs for Americans due to climate change, such as increased insurance premiums, food prices, and health care expenses. The Trump administration has made broad cuts to scientific research agencies, citing concerns over wasteful spending, and the National Climate Assessment was listed as a reform target by Project 2025, a policy framework developed by the conservative Heritage Foundation. This framework advocates reshaping the assessment process by increasing scrutiny of contributors. The White House has not commented on the dismissals.
7. <https://www.apnews.com/article/a76d2e2d3dfec7318b124b05a78d1ee1> - Following the Trump administration’s decision to dismiss scientists involved in the National Climate Assessment, two major scientific organizations—the American Meteorological Society and the American Geophysical Union—have announced they will step in to produce an independent, peer-reviewed report on climate change's impact on the U.S. The federal climate assessment, mandated by a 1990 law and last released in 2023, provides critical long-term projections for policymakers and communities. The Trump administration’s move involves reevaluating the report and budget cuts affecting relevant agencies, prompting concerns in the scientific community about the administration's commitment to accurate climate research. Scientists stress the importance of data-driven assessments to inform infrastructure and public health decisions amidst increasing extreme weather and environmental risks. Leaders like AGU President Brandon Jones and climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe emphasize that the new independent effort will help ensure continued public access to crucial climate science. Despite fears of a diluted official report, experts affirm that credible science will persist, warning that climate change affects all communities regardless of political affiliation.