

# Does Syria's Electricity Crisis Have an Israeli Solution?

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Brief Analysis

**Whether authorities call it “Egyptian gas” or “Jordanian gas,” the simple fact is that Israeli offshore supplies could help with Syria’s major power shortage if the necessary arrangements are ironed out.**

**A**mong the many factors jeopardizing Syria’s [fragile stability \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/status-syrias-transition-after-two-months\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/status-syrias-transition-after-two-months) post-Assad, electricity shortages are coming to the fore, with available supplies reduced to only an hour or two a day. Importing power and/or natural gas from Israel could help.

Even before the Assad regime’s collapse, Syria’s electricity infrastructure was a mess. A decade of civil war had greatly damaged power plants and lines, and the former oil-exporting nation was reduced to importing oil, mainly from Iran, to survive. Iranian oil is no longer arriving post-Assad, and most of Syria’s productive oil fields are located in northeastern territories controlled by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). On February 22, Oil Ministry officials in Damascus stated that Kurdish supplies had resumed. Yet the long-term future of oil flows from that area is unclear given the [close links \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/new-age-turkish-relations-syria\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/new-age-turkish-relations-syria) between Syria’s new rulers and Turkey, a foe of the SDF (not to mention the [uncertainty \(https://warontherocks.com/2025/01/in-syria-america-should-be-ruthlessly-focused-on-the-islamic-state/\)](https://warontherocks.com/2025/01/in-syria-america-should-be-ruthlessly-focused-on-the-islamic-state/) about U.S. policy toward the Kurds, Washington’s chief counterterrorism partners on the ground for more than a decade).

Omar Shaqrouq, Syria’s new minister of electricity, has stated that rehabilitating the power infrastructure will take months, if not years. Theoretically, private generators and solar panels could serve as alternatives in the meantime, but these options are too expensive or otherwise unsuitable for many, if not most, Syrians. Likewise, cargoes of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) have been arriving by ship from Turkey and Azerbaijan, and by truck from Jordan, but these “cooking gas” imports are only a temporary, small-scale solution.

Another possibility is the use of floating power vessels at the Mediterranean ports of Baniyas and Tartus, which could generate around 400 megawatts of power each—the output of a medium-size power station. Two such ships are reportedly available, and Qatar and Turkey have indicated they would pay for the fuel and other operating costs. Yet connecting the vessels to the Syrian network would take several months, so short-term stopgap measures would still be needed. More important, it is questionable how much of the electricity could reach Damascus (around 100 miles away) given the damage to local power lines.

Amid these obstacles, another solution beckons. Jordan is only seventy miles from Damascus, and there are well-established plans for electricity infrastructure and a gas pipeline network that extends to the capital and beyond. The main north-south pipeline route was originally commissioned in 2003 as the Arab Gas Pipeline (AGP), intended to carry Egyptian supplies to Jordan and, eventually, to Syria, Lebanon, and Turkey. But Egypt halted the northward flow through the AGP a decade ago due to gas shortages at home and sabotage to portions of the route in the Sinai Peninsula.

Today, the AGP instead carries Israeli gas south to Egypt, where it is used to meet ever-rising domestic demand. After being pumped from the offshore Leviathan field eighty miles west of Haifa, the gas is piped across Israel to the northern Jordanian city of Mafraq, then sent southward through a circuitous route that feeds Jordanian power stations before crossing into the Sinai via Aqaba.

Jordan's reliance on this gas—which produces 70 percent of the kingdom's electricity—is politically controversial given the Palestinian origins of many of its citizens. Upon signing the deal in 2014, King Abdullah II reputedly said, "It is not what my people want, it is what my people need." Publicly, the government refers to this supply as "Egyptian gas" and discourages discussion of its real origin.

In 2021, U.S. policymakers considered the possibility of sending Israeli gas (or, at least, Jordanian electricity generated by this gas) through Syria and into Lebanon, which was suffering a chronic energy shortage. At the time, an [in-depth Washington Institute paper \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/power-people-scrutinizing-us-arab-effort-supply-energy-lebanon-syria\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/power-people-scrutinizing-us-arab-effort-supply-energy-lebanon-syria) analyzed how this could be done without boosting Hezbollah or creating a cash windfall for the Assad regime. The paper's technical discussion is still applicable to Syria today and could inform the transitional government's reported talks with Jordan for obtaining "Egyptian gas" via the AGP, as mentioned by Shaqrouq last month. Yet several key questions would need to be answered first:

**How long would it take?** Technically, the volumes of gas needed to meet Syria's power needs are already available via the AGP. Of course, the portion of the pipeline that runs through Egypt and Jordan currently flows southward, not northward, so authorities cannot simply reverse the flow and pump Egyptian gas to Syria. This also applies to gas from the floating storage and regasification unit currently moored at Aqaba (whose lease will expire this August anyway, and whose gas has been pumped to Egypt rather than used in Jordan). If authorities agree to draw on Israeli gas, the requisite AGP and/or power connections to Syria would take a few months to bring into service.

**Are the political obstacles surmountable?** Like other Arab governments in the Middle East, Ahmed al-Sharaa's new government in Syria would probably find the idea of openly accepting gas from Israel unpalatable. Publicly depicting the supplies as Egyptian or Jordanian may help allay this concern. In Israel, the far-right elements of Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's government might oppose such a project as well, though stability in Syria is certainly in their nation's interest.

**Who pays?** Syria no longer has a functional metering and collection system. Foreign energy companies—including the U.S. major Chevron, co-holder of the license for Israel's Leviathan field—would need solid answers to this problem before agreeing to send any gas northward, especially since gas supply contracts are usually long-term (fifteen to twenty years). Yet if Gulf states like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, or the United Arab Emirates could be persuaded to

pay for the infrastructure repairs as well as the gas, then the idea may be workable.

For now, possibilities are opening up quickly. On February 26, Sharaa will visit Jordan to meet with King Abdullah, while the European Union **announced earlier today (<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/eu-suspends-sanctions-against-syria-including-those-energy-banking-2025-02-24/>)** that it is lifting energy sanctions on Syria. Yet tangible progress will depend in part on U.S. sanctions, most of which remain in place.

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