

# As Syria joins Paris climate agreement, US stands alone

By [Jennifer Hansler](#), CNN

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**Washington (CNN)**The United States is now a party of one in its stance on climate change.

Syria will join the Paris climate agreement, leaving the US as the only country in the world not signed on to the landmark climate deal. Syrian officials announced their intention to ratify the accord at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP23) in Bonn, Germany, on Tuesday.

"I confirm that the Syrian Arab Republic supports the implementation of Paris climate change accord, in order to achieve the desired global goals and to reflect the principles of justice and shared responsibility, but in accordance with the capabilities of each of the signatories," Syria's Deputy Minister of Local Administration and Environment M. Wadah Katmawi said.

Katmawi added that developed countries, "in their capacity as the primary contributors to climate change, should live up to their legal and humanitarian responsibility" by offering technical and financial support to developing countries to help battle climate change.

The Syria People's Assembly voted to approve ratification of the agreement last month, according to the country's state-run media outlet [SANA](#).

Syria, plunged in a civil war, was not present at the 2015 negotiations for the climate agreement, which is dedicated to lowering emissions and strengthening countries' abilities to deal with the effects of climate change. Nearly 200 countries signed on the pact at the time.

Nicaragua was the only other hold-out, based on criticisms that it was "insufficient" in addressing climate change.



However, the Central American country recently [announced its intent to join the agreement](#). In late October, Nicaraguan Vice President and first lady Rosario Murillo said the nation had submitted a "document of adhesion" to the United Nations to join the pact.

"It is the only instrument we have in the world that allows us to unify intentions and efforts to face climate change and natural disasters," she said of the agreement at the time.

President Donald Trump announced in June that the US would withdraw from the climate accord, a process that will be complete in 2020.

"We're getting out," he said. "And we will start to renegotiate and we'll see if there's a better deal. If we can, great. If we can't, that's fine."

In addition, Trump is not invited "for the time being" to the climate change summit being hosted in December in Paris, the Elysee Palace press office told CNN on Tuesday. Invitations are being sent first to countries that are "very active and particularly engaged" in climate change and will then extend an invitation to whoever the US government chooses to represent them.

French President Emmanuel Macron is one of numerous [foreign leaders](#) who decried Trump's decision to exit the agreement. He appeared to [troll Trump](#) in a televised speech when he pledged to "make our planet great again."

At the opening plenary for the COP23 on Monday, the US representative reaffirmed that "the administration's position remains unchanged" on the agreement: the US will withdraw unless the terms of the agreement are renegotiated to be "more favorable to the American people."

At the time Trump announced the US' withdrawal, the leaders of France, Italy and Germany indicated in a joint statement that the US could not unilaterally renegotiate the agreement. The UN body that facilitated the deal said it "cannot be renegotiated based on the request of a single party."

Trump's decision to leave the accord sparked massive outcry. [Former President Barack Obama](#), whose administration negotiated the agreement, said the decision would hurt American workers, saying "the nations that remain in the Paris Agreement will be the nations that reap the benefits in jobs and industries created." [Mayors and governors](#) throughout the US vowed to carry on the commitments of the climate

accord in their own jurisdictions.

The US trails only China as the [world's worst emitter of carbon dioxide](#), according to the European Commission's emissions database. In 2015, it released 5.1 million kilotons of carbon dioxide, more than all 28 European Union countries combined, and makes up almost a sixth of all global emissions.

CNN's *Schams Elwazer, Shama Nasinde, Bijan Hosseini, Angela Barajas, Kevin Liptak, Ben Westcott and Steve George* contributed to this report.

## Paris climate accord: Syria to sign up, isolating US

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Syria's decision was reported at the Bonn climate conference

**The US is set to become isolated in its stance on the Paris climate agreement, after Syria said it was preparing to join the deal.**

The Paris deal unites the world's nations in tackling climate change.

Syria and Nicaragua were the only nations outside the deal when it was agreed in 2015. Nicaragua signed in October.

In June the US said it would withdraw, but the rules of the agreement state that this cannot be done until 2020.

Meanwhile, French officials said US President Donald Trump had not been invited to December's climate summit in Paris.

More than 100 countries have been invited to the summit, which is aimed at "building coalitions" with finance and business to further the accord, an aide to French President Emmanuel Macron said.

"I would like to affirm the Syrian Arab Republic's commitment to the Paris climate change accord," Syrian Deputy Environment Minister Wadah Katmawi told delegates of the 196 nations participating in the current climate talks in Bonn, Germany.

He said the accord would be signed "as soon as possible", adding that Syria would seek foreign aid to help it meet its commitments under the deal.

UN spokesman Nick Nuttall, quoted by AFP news agency, confirmed the move, saying that Syria would first have to submit ratification documents at the UN headquarters in New York.

Correspondents say Syria was effectively an international pariah when the accord was first signed, and sanctions would have made it difficult for officials to attend the discussions in Paris.

Also, the meetings coincided with some of the fiercest fighting in Syria's civil war, meaning the country was in no position to sign.

Announcing the US decision in June, Mr Trump said it was part of his "solemn duty to protect America" and he would seek a new deal that would not disadvantage US businesses.

He claimed that the accord would cost the US 6.5 million jobs and \$3tn (£2.2tn) in lost GDP - while rival economies like China and India were treated more favourably.

A US statement issued in October when Nicaragua signed the agreement said the US would withdraw "unless we can re-enter on terms that are more favourable for our country". White House spokeswoman Kelly Love said there had been no change in Washington's position since then.

Responding to the Syrian move, environmental NGO the Sierra Club issued a statement attacking the US position: "As if it wasn't already crystal clear, every single other country in the world is moving forward together to tackle the climate crisis, while Donald Trump has isolated the United States on the world stage in an embarrassing and dangerous position."

Scientists point out that work to implement the Paris accord must be stepped up if it is to have any chance of success.

Historically, the US, Europe and China account for almost half of the world's carbon emissions.