

Greenpeace MENA Calls for an Ambitious Plastics Treaty as Microplastics Threaten Global Food Security

New study warns: plastic pollution could leave 400 million people facing hunger in the coming two decades

BEIRUT, LEBANON, April 23, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A startling new study has revealed that microplastics are inhibiting plant photosynthesis, threatening global food production and placing up to 400 million additional people at risk of hunger in the next two decades.



Microplastics

The findings, published in March in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, show that microplastics are accumulating in soil, inhibiting the plant from harnessing sunlight, and thus negatively impacting photosynthesis of terrestrial plants, marine algae, and freshwater algae. As a result, global crop yields could decline by 4% to 14%.

The cascading consequences, the study states, “include not only increased food insecurity, but also imbalances in predator–prey relationships and overall ecosystem instability. These could threaten global food security and the health of ecosystems already under immense pressure”.

These findings pose a significant danger for communities already facing climate shocks and food insecurity. More than 40 million people across the Middle East and North Africa currently experience acute levels of food insecurity, according to the World Food Programme. The study warns that the adverse effects of microplastics on global food security may increase over time as microplastics accumulate in soils, resulting in dietary exposure and health risks.

The new study comes at a critical moment as governments prepare to gather for the second part of the fifth Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC5.2) to negotiate a Global Plastics Treaty in August.

Farah Al Hattab, Campaigner at Greenpeace Middle East and North Africa (MENA), commented:

“Microplastics are undermining the most basic systems we depend on to survive. Without bold, binding global action, the plastic crisis will spiral further out of control, costing lives, livelihoods, and ecosystems.”

She pointed out that: “We are calling on the MENA region’s leaders, policymakers, and negotiators at INC5.2 to push for a strong, legally binding Global Plastics Treaty that tackles the crisis at its root. An ambitious treaty is one that significantly reduces plastic production, phases out single-use plastics, encourages reuse targets, and advocates for strong financial mechanisms that ensure a fair and equitable transition to a zero-waste economy for the protection of the health of both people and the planet”.

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