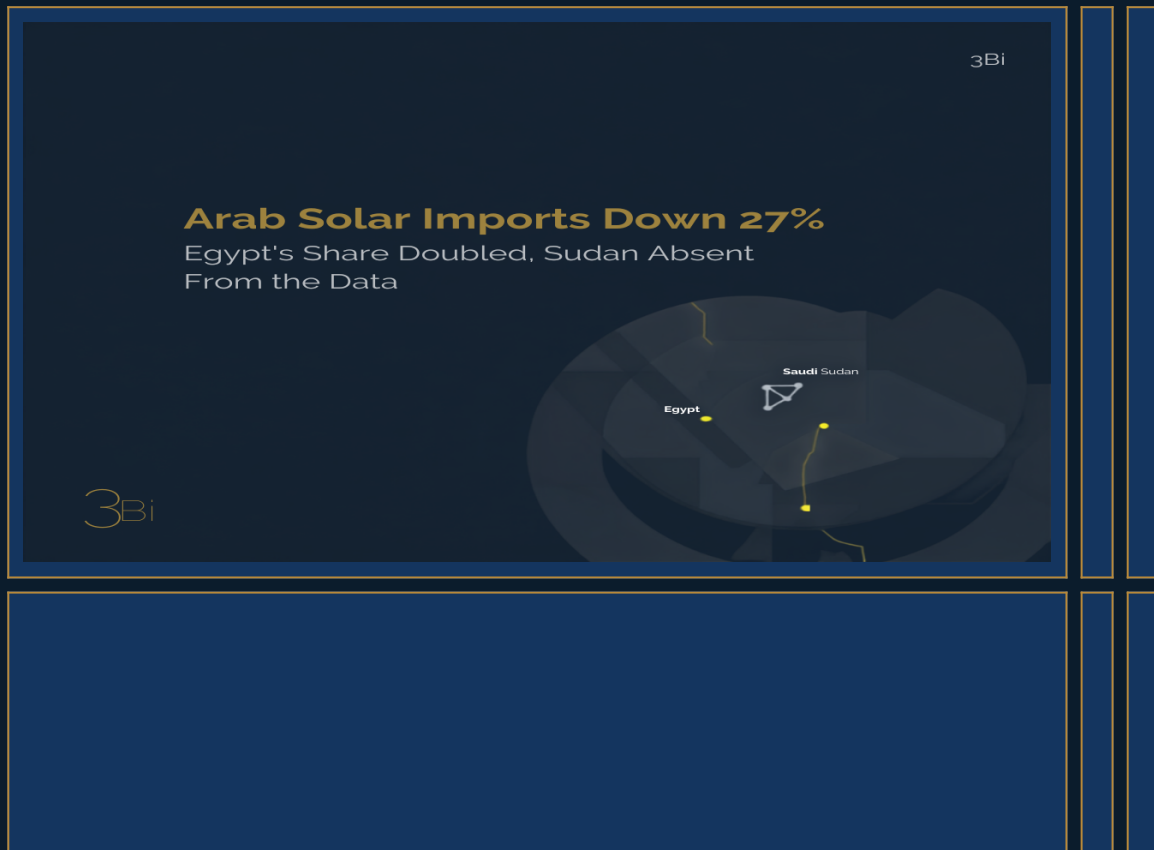




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# Arab Solar-Panel Imports Fell 27% in H1 2026. Egypt's Share Doubled. Sudan Isn't Even in the Numbers.

Arab imports of Chinese solar panels fell 27% in H1 2026 as Gulf shipping disruption reshuffles the region's clean-energy supply chains.

2026-08-17 · Research Team

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New H1 2026 trade data show Arab solar-panel imports down 27% as Gulf shipping disruption reroutes supply — Egypt's share doubled, and Sudan doesn't appear in the rankings at all.

**Situation:** Arab Solar-Panel Supply Realignment | **Edition:** First Edition | **Information cutoff:** 17 August 2026, 12:00 EAT

## Headline Fact

Arab countries' imports of Chinese solar panels fell 27% year-on-year in the first half of 2026, to 8.89 gigawatts (GW), as Gulf shipping disruption redirected the region's clean-energy supply chains. Saudi Arabia's imports nearly halved, Egypt's doubled, and Sudan does not appear anywhere in the ranking (attaqa.net, citing Ember, 16 August 2026).

## Timeline

**28 February 2026:** The Strait of Hormuz effectively closes to commercial shipping as the regional conflict involving Iran, Israel, and the United States escalates, pushing container lines onto the longer Cape of Good Hope route and driving war-risk insurance to roughly 30 times pre-crisis rates (straits.live, 16 August 2026).

**6 March 2026:** Sudan Tribune reports that Sudan's Red Sea ports, led by Port Sudan, are "testing their readiness for a potential shift in global trade" as Gulf instability threatens the Hormuz and Bab al-Mandab corridors — though port experts caution that Port Sudan lacks the 18-metre draft depth needed to receive today's largest container ships directly (Sudan Tribune, 6 March 2026).

**May 2026:** UNDP Sudan's Solar Energy Value Chain Study and a 26 May 2026 press release put war damage to Sudan's national grid at up to \ \$3 billion, with roughly 40% of prior generation capacity destroyed, including the Merowe Dam and the El-Obeid thermal plant — the backdrop against which any disruption to solar-panel imports lands hardest (UNDP Sudan, May 2026).

**29 May 2026 (last updated):** An industry guide to sourcing solar components in Sudan confirms that sea freight bound for the country arrives exclusively through Port Sudan, and flags logistical bottlenecks, delays, and foreign-currency exposure as the two dominant risks facing any Sudan-based solar buyer (PVknowhow, updated 29 May 2026).

**16 August 2026:** Attaqa.net's Energy Research Unit, citing data from the clean-energy research center Ember, publishes the H1 2026 ranking of the ten largest Arab importers of Chinese solar panels — the dataset this SitRep is built on.



## What We Know / What We Don't

**We know** the aggregate numbers and the country-level shifts precisely. Total imports across the top 10 Arab markets fell from 12.13 GW in H1 2025 to 8.89 GW in H1 2026. The UAE stayed the largest importer despite a 39% drop (3.27 GW to 2 GW); Saudi Arabia fell 59.7% (4.62 GW to 1.86 GW) and slipped to second place; Egypt's imports doubled (0.57 GW to 1.14 GW) to take third; Yemen rose 83% amid its own electricity crisis, driven by rooftop solar uptake; Jordan (+41%), Morocco (+9%), and Tunisia (+245%) all posted gains, while Iraq and Algeria fell alongside the Gulf states. Attaqa.net attributes the Gulf-market declines specifically to Hormuz-related shipping disruption.

**We don't know** whether any of the panel volume redirected away from Saudi and Emirati ports is landing at Port Sudan, or reaching Sudan by any route at all. Ember's dataset does not track Sudan separately — most plausibly because wartime import volumes are too small to register, rather than confirmation that none is moving. We also don't know whether Sudan's donor-backed solar mini-grid programmes, which depend on this same import pipeline, have seen any change in cost or lead time this year as a result of the regional shipping shake-up.

## Do-No-Harm Note

This edition covers trade and infrastructure data only, with no named individuals or communities identified or put at risk. We deliberately excluded Libya's 16 August grid-failure reporting, which involves active security incidents outside this edition's climate/energy-trade scope.

## What to Watch

Ember and attaqa.net typically publish this ranking on a semi-annual cycle; H2 2026 data (covering July–December) would be the next scheduled read on whether Egypt's gain and the Gulf's decline mark a lasting reallocation of Arab solar demand or a temporary artifact of the shipping disruption. Also worth tracking: any announcement from Sudan's Sea Ports Corporation or its donors about capitalizing on the Red Sea transshipment interest flagged in the March Sudan Tribune report, and whether the Strait of Hormuz shows sustained signs of reopening — prediction markets tracked by straits.live put the odds of a return to normal traffic by 31 August 2026 at just 2%, as of 16 August.

## Sourcing & Next Update

Sources: attaqa.net (16 August 2026, citing Ember); Sudan Tribune (6 March 2026); UNDP Sudan (May 2026); PVknowhow (updated 29 May 2026); straits.live (16 August 2026). 3Bi will revisit this trend when H2 2026 Arab solar-import data is published, expected in early 2027.



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