

Díaz-Canel comments on fuel shortage



Cuba's President Miguel Díaz-Canel (Source: [Cubadebate](#))

For several days now, fuel has once again become scarce in Cuba. Long lines are forming in front of Havana's gas stations, some of which are several hundred meters long and where drivers spend the night. Other parts of the country are also running low on fuel, and transportation is severely limited. Most recently, the fuel shortage has also had an impact on power generation, with individual shutdowns as a result. The situation is reminiscent of the last major fuel crisis in March 2022, which occurred as a result of a power plant accident. On Friday, President Díaz-Canel has now provided information about the causes of the situation.

According to the report, Cuba currently has less than 400 tons of the 500 to 600 tons of fuel that the country needs every day. This is mainly due to supply backlogs, as some of the main suppliers were themselves "in difficult energy situations" and were accordingly unable to meet their commitments. One of Cuba's main oil and fuel suppliers is Venezuela, which supplies the island under a bilateral agreement in exchange for the service of Cuban doctors. According to Reuters news agency, citing internal documents, Venezuelan state-owned PDVSA has increased its supplies since January from 40,000 barrels per day (bpd) to 52,000 bpd in February and 76,000 bpd in March. Of the 8.3 million tons of fuel Cuba consumes each year for power generation and transportation, 61 percent must be imported.



Queue in front of a gas station in Havana (Source: [Cubadebate](#))

"With diesel, the situation is different. Apart from the situations mentioned, here we have guaranteed supplies. This ship arrived in Santiago de Cuba and broke down there, so it could not continue in time to other ports in Cuba, causing a delay in the distribution of fuel," Díaz-Canel said.

The situation is further aggravated by the greater use of decentralized diesel power plants, which are needed to compensate during the maintenance work currently underway at the large power plants. "A significant amount of diesel has gone into electricity generation," Díaz-Canel said. Now, he said, supply has also tightened here, which is why there have been renewed power cuts.

The crisis, meanwhile, could continue for some time. At present, "there is still no clear idea of how we will get out of this situation," the Cuban head of state explained.

Meanwhile, Energy Minister Vicente de la O Levy has also [commented](#) on the current fuel situation. He said that due to the shortage situation, the decision had been made to ration fuel at the country's gas pumps:

"We will continue to release fuel only in fairly small quantities in the remaining days of April, hence the queues at gas stations. The situation tends to improve due to decisions and negotiations, the first suppliers are already fulfilling their obligations. This is one of the reasons for the delayed information. [...] Despite a slight improvement, we will not have normality in the remaining days of April and next May. We will continue to give fuel only partially and in a reduced form, so that the supply does not go to zero and vital services can be guaranteed."

Cuba's Energy Minister Vicente de la O Levy on April 17, author's emphasis.

So the current crisis will drag on for several more weeks, but unlike Díaz-Canel's previous statement, O Levy cautiously holds out the prospect of an end. The shortage of energy sources, he added, is a "worldwide problem, but in Cuba this will always be more acute because of the blockade." It is very difficult for the country to find ships for transportation and corresponding financing, but in addition, "normal requirements in the purchase of fuels" are sometimes difficult for Cuba to meet, he said.

Havana's municipal government on Tuesday introduced dispensing limits for the capital's gas stations. These are 100 liters of diesel and 40 liters of gasoline per vehicle, respectively. Other provinces are expected to follow soon with similar moves. In particular, "ambulances, funeral services and the potato harvest" will be prioritized in the supply of diesel, according to O'Levy.

Liquefied petroleum gas, used primarily for cooking, is also in short supply. In one province, availability is "very low, in some places close to zero," so food processing and hospitals are being prioritized. However, it should be possible to find a solution here in the short term.

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