

## Energy situation in Cuba remains critical



*Residential area in the dark: The energy crisis is causing prolonged daily power cuts*  
(Source: [14ymedio](#))

The energy crisis has Cuba firmly in its grip again. After a brief respite at the turn of the year, the frequency and length of power cuts on the island have increased massively in recent weeks. Last Friday, the daily generation deficit [reached](#) 1416 megawatts - as much as at the height of the energy crisis in the summer of 2022. As was the case back then, the four-digit deficit has resulted in nationwide power cuts lasting several hours, with the capital Havana no longer being spared.

Rotating power cuts, which can last up to 18 hours in extreme cases, have once again become the rule rather than the exception. As a cost-saving measure, [it was decided](#) to reduce public lighting by three quarters. Cuba's Minister of Energy and Mines, Vicente de la O Levy, explained at a meeting of the Council of Ministers that the measure was one of many, including the closure of thousands of state services and the relocation of production, with corresponding consequences for the economy. The Siguaney cement plant (Sancti Spíritus province), which is one of the largest and most energy-intensive factories in the country and last year produced 47,000 tons, has already [reduced](#) this year's production plan to 20,000 tons. The mood is tense in view of the situation, which has now been ongoing for almost two weeks. In the provinces of Holguín and Camagüey, stones are said to have been thrown at public facilities, and pots have been banged as a form of protest during the hours of darkness.

One of the reasons for the high generation deficit is scheduled maintenance at the "Antonio Guiteras" power plant, the island's largest generator. As the newest and most efficient heavy oil power plant, Guiteras is of immense importance for securing the basic supply. With the current maintenance work, the electricity supplier Unión Eléctrica wants to ensure stability

during the hot summer months. If all goes well, Guiteras is scheduled to go back online on March 18. But even after that, generation will still be on shaky ground. As the UNE has announced, unit 4 of the "Carlos Manuel de Céspedes" power plant and unit 2 of the "Felton" are out of operation due to breakdowns; unit 8 of the Mariel power plant and unit 6 of the Nuevitas plant are undergoing maintenance. Due to a lack of fuel, 92 diesel generators and the power plant in Santiago de Cuba with a total output of 755 megawatts are also out of operation. In addition, logistics problems resulting from the major fire at a fuel storage facility in summer 2022 and limited refinery capacities are also causing problems for the sector. According to experts, investments of at least USD 10 billion would be necessary to sustainably renovate the large power plants, some of which are more than 40 years old. However, the current budget situation is nowhere near enough to achieve this.

Cuba's Foreign Trade Minister Ricardo Cabrisas is currently in Turkey for talks, which are also focusing on the energy situation. In recent years, up to seven Turkish power plant ships have been deployed in Cuba at times to support power generation. The Russian engineering and defense company Ural announced its intention to donate 15,000 LEDs for street lighting to Cuba.

**Update (14.03):** On Thursday, O Levy surprisingly [announced](#) a mammoth project with an unnamed partner that would have the potential to change the situation permanently: 1,000 megawatts are to be installed in 46 new solar parks by May next year. A further 1,000 megawatts are to follow in 2028. The total of 92 new solar parks would correspond to the output of 3-4 large thermal power plants. According to the minister, the contracts were financed "not through loans, but from own funds". As O Levy explained, the preparatory work for the first parks had already begun. Once both projects have been completed, Cuba could achieve its goal of increasing the proportion of renewable energy from the current five percent to 24 percent. However, it remains to be seen whether the ambitious timetable can actually be met. Until then, the situation is likely to remain tense. ([Cubaheute](#))