

Cuba's president on the electricity supply situation: “We will not stop working on solutions.”



Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel and the head of the electricity supplier Unión Eléctrica (source: [Presidencia](#))

In his [latest podcast](#), “Desde la Presidencia,” Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel spoke at length on Thursday about the country’s tense energy situation. The head of state said that power outages are currently the issue of greatest concern to Cubans and are the government’s top priority. He added that not only the well-being of the population but also the functioning of the economy depends on a functioning power supply.

Why the new solar parks have provided little relief so far

Many Cubans are asking themselves why the power supply has not improved in recent weeks despite the addition of 13 [new solar parks](#). Díaz-Canel compared the current situation with that in March: since then, electricity demand has risen from 2,580 to 3,050 megawatts (MW) during the day and from 3,250 to 3,500 MW at night. As a result, the deficit grew from 827 to 1200 MW during the day and from 1154 to over 1600 MW at night, despite a slight improvement in availability.

Energy Minister Vicente de la O’Levy explained that the high demand was due to higher temperatures, but also to consumption exceeding capacity. “Fourteen state-owned companies and the private sector in Havana are exceeding their plans,” said the minister. In addition, demand rises by 200-250 MW when no liquefied gas is available for cooking – which has been the case for several months due to supply bottlenecks. Households then increasingly resort to electric cooking appliances.

In addition, the parks have so far mainly replaced lost capacity, such as the declining number of [Turkish power ships](#) or failed large power plants, according to the minister. On the positive side, the repair of diesel generators is progressing. “We now have 1,000 MW of

distributed generation that we cannot use due to a lack of fuel,” the minister explained. However, these cannot be operated: sanctions have reduced fuel imports from eight to 1.4 million tons per year.

Díaz-Canel emphasized that the [solar strategy](#) was anything but a failure: “In July, we will have over 500 MW of photovoltaic capacity, which will generate 2,500 MW/h with five hours of sunshine. Repairs to the thermal power plants are also progressing.” Several units at the Santa Cruz, Cienfuegos, and Renté power plants are scheduled to be reconnected to the grid in the summer.

“New formula” for fuel from Venezuela

“Venezuela has been attacked, boycotted, and persecuted,” said Minister O’Levy about Cuba’s most important oil supplier. “But we have found a formula, albeit not at the previous level. However, we will not explain it so that it cannot be pursued,” Díaz-Canel added with a smile. “Exactly,” the minister confirmed the hint at new supply routes.

Díaz-Canel denounced the “perversity of the US blockade,” which he said made it extremely difficult to purchase fuel. As an example, the minister cited a gas tanker that had been lying off Santiago since March and whose cargo could only now be unloaded. “We have the money, but it’s not reaching the suppliers,” O’Levy said.

Electricity supplier focuses on better planning and consumption control

The head of the electricity supplier Unión Eléctrica, Alfredo López, admitted that the power cut plans could be improved and that work was underway to do so. “We have to reduce the power cuts to a manageable level.” The aim is to generate more electricity and reduce demand. Users in privileged circles must be encouraged to save electricity more.

López was confident: “If we manage to increase availability in July and August, obtain fuel, and rationalize consumption, the power outages will decrease and be easier to plan.”

Díaz-Canel emphasized: “We are aware of the problem and are working tirelessly on solutions.” The president condemned the spread of false reports that there would be 72-hour total blackouts. “That is completely false,” López clarified. There will be no “zero shutdowns” this summer either, Díaz-Canel emphasized, but with the solar parks still to come and the restoration of several power plant units, Havana considers itself well prepared for the summer. ([Cubaheute](#))