

Power Grid: A Dark Weekend Ends in a Total Blackout



The statewide power outage was the third one this year (Source: [lezumbalaberenjena/Flickr/CC-BY-SA 4.0](#))

Cuba's power grid completely collapsed early Monday afternoon. As the state-run power utility Unión Eléctrica (UNE) [reported](#), the causes are still under investigation. Restoration efforts have since begun at a steady pace. As is customary, power was initially restored only to essential facilities such as hospitals.

A Dark Weekend

The total blackout was [preceded](#) by a weekend of extreme power shortages. The island's most powerful power plant, the Antonio Guiteras plant, had been shut down since the early morning hours of July 3—presumably due to a defect in the heat exchanger.

UNE Director General Román Pérez Castañeda told the Cuban news agency ACN that the boiler had to cool down naturally for at least 48 hours before technicians could even enter the facility: "Only after gaining access to the interior of the plant can we determine the exact cause of the outage, the extent of the damage, and the scope of the necessary work."

On Saturday evening, a substation in Havana also failed, taking two additional power plant units offline. The projected shortfall stood at 2,080 megawatts on Saturday—more than half of the national demand—and [rose](#) to over 2,200 megawatts on Sunday. A Havana resident told *Cuba heute* that he had had less than four hours of electricity over the entire weekend.

Status of the Restoration

On Tuesday morning, Energy Minister Vicente de la O'Levy [reported](#) via the short-message service X that significant progress had been made: The power grid is now connected from

Havana in the west to Sancti Spíritus in central Cuba. “Now that we have begun ramping up the units at the Carlos Manuel de Céspedes thermal power plant in Cienfuegos, our priority is to reach the Felton power plant and continue work there. We are making progress and adhering to all established protocols,” said O’Levy.

In Havana, 131 distribution circuits are now [back in operation](#), restoring power to approximately 396,000 households—equivalent to 46 percent of all customers in the capital—as of 10:20 a.m. local time.

This is the eighth nationwide blackout since October 2024 and the third this year. The Guiteras power plant, the only one supplied with domestic crude oil via a pipeline, has been in operation for 38 years and has not yet undergone a comprehensive overhaul. Although the materials needed for an overhaul are in the country, the project was canceled again at the beginning of the year due to the tense situation and postponed indefinitely, as the grid lacks sufficient reserves. These reserves could be created using existing diesel generators to supplement the base load, but there is a shortage of fuel for this purpose.

The Trump administration had significantly tightened its blockade against Cuba at the beginning of the year. With the abduction of Venezuelan President Maduro, fuel shipments from Caracas were interrupted; on January 29, Trump threatened to impose punitive tariffs on any third countries that supply oil to the island. Washington justifies the sanctions by citing an alleged threat to national security posed by Cuba. The United Nations has condemned the energy blockade as a form of collective punishment. ([Cubaheute](#))