

## Power outage paralyzes western Cuba



*The energy crisis has continued to worsen in recent weeks (symbolic image) (Source: [Adam Nowek/Flickr/CC-BY-SA 2.0](#))*

A failure of a main transmission line led to a widespread power outage in western Cuba on Wednesday morning. The capital Havana and the provinces from Pinar del Río to Mayabeque were affected, as the Ministry of Energy [announced](#) on the short message service X.

The disruption occurred at around 5:00 a.m. local time when a key transmission line between the country's largest power plant in Matanzas and the capital failed. Lázaro Guerra Hernández, Director General of Electricity at the Ministry of Energy, explained in a television broadcast that the failure of a transmission line between the Santa Cruz and Antonio Guiteras power plants had caused an overload.

The overload caused the power plant units in Mariel, Santa Cruz, Cienfuegos, and Felton to go offline, Guerra Hernández said. By late afternoon (local time), authorities had restored power to about half of the capital.

### Gradual restoration

The state-owned electricity supplier UNE [reported](#) that by 8:30 a.m., 44 megawatts had already been restored to the grid in Havana. By 4:00 p.m., 24 substations and 144 distribution circuits had been restored, supplying 435,625 customers with a total of 309.73 megawatts. This represents a restoration rate of 50.5 percent in the capital.

All four affected western provinces were reconnected to the power grid within a few hours, authorities said. Forty-three essential health services, including hospitals, and 13 basic water supply systems remained on emergency power during the outage.

In the afternoon, however, the Felton power plant failed again, which Guerra Hernández said would lead to a significant deficit during peak load times. The power plant unit will remain out of service for between 24 and 36 hours.

## Ongoing energy crisis

The incident occurred against the backdrop of a worsening energy crisis that has plagued Cuba for years. Even before Wednesday's outage, large parts of the country were experiencing daily power outages of up to 20 hours or more. Even Havana, which used to be protected from the worst outages, is now regularly without power for ten hours or more.

On Monday, the energy deficit reached 2,105 megawatts, setting a new negative record for the island. Guerra Hernández warned that despite repairs to the transmission lines, the power grid continues to struggle with a generation deficit of about two-thirds of demand.

The island's outdated oil-fired power plants, which have been in urgent need of a complete overhaul for years, have repeatedly broken down in recent years. In total, the Cuban power grid has [collapsed](#) five times since last year, once [as a result of a hurricane](#).

The most recent complete outage occurred in September after an “unexpected failure” at the Antonio Guiteras power plant. A few days earlier, a defect in a 220-kV line had disconnected the entire eastern region from the grid. In October, there was another partial outage due to a “parameter fluctuation,” but it was short-lived and could be resolved within a few hours.

According to [information](#) from the *Reuters* news agency, crude oil and fuel imports fell by more than a third in the first ten months of the year compared to the previous year, as allies Mexico and Venezuela reduced their supplies. US sanctions and a deep economic crisis have further exacerbated the energy crisis in recent years. ([Cubaheute](#))