

# Cuba suffers another island-wide blackout as US bars arrival of Russian fuel

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Cuba has suffered a second nationwide blackout in less than a week, underscoring the catastrophic impact of the US fuel embargo. The latest collapse began Saturday with a domino effect from the failure of a unit at the Nuevitas thermoelectric plant in Camagüey, which tripped the entire grid, according to the state electricity company.

Just last Monday, an island-wide outage left Cuba in the dark for nearly 30 hours, while some areas went more than two days without electricity.

The consequences are devastating. The lack of fuel has halted virtually all tourism, disrupted education, slashed hospital services, halted public transportation and blocked farmers from harvesting sugar cane and transporting produce.

Cuba's energy system, already dependent on aging Soviet-era thermal plants, has been pushed beyond the breaking point by the US fuel blockade, which is aimed at forcing regime change.

Speaking Friday at an event welcoming the “Nuestra América Convoy” of humanitarian aid, First Deputy Minister of Energy and Mines Argelio Jesús Abad Vigoa bluntly described the situation:

After three months without receiving diesel, fuel oil, gasoline, jet fuel and LPG—that is, liquefied petroleum gas for cooking food—we have run out of the ability to produce electricity with the distributed generation that cost us so much effort to restore.

Distributed generation in Cuba is a decentralized model using thousands of small diesel and fuel-oil engines to reduce dependence on large thermoelectric plants. In other words, outside of individual generators, the island is now forced to rely almost entirely on decrepit thermoelectric stations that now shut down every few days.

In an interview with *Bloomberg*, Havana's representative to the United Nations, Ernesto Soberón Guzmán, explained

that Cuba's power plants “are ready to produce electricity, but they cannot do so because we do not have oil.” If fuel arrived, he said, it would relieve pressure on the grid.

Washington has now moved to criminally strangle this lifeline. In recent weeks, two Russian-linked tankers, the *Sea Horse* and the *Anatoly Kolodkin*, were tracked in the Atlantic heading toward Cuba with diesel and crude. The *Sea Horse*, carrying up to 200,000 barrels of Russian diesel and widely seen as a potential source of immediate relief, abruptly changed course Friday toward Trinidad and Tobago, as reported by *El País* and *Reuters*, based on maritime tracking data.

This turn coincided with a decision by the US Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) to issue General License 134A, replacing the previous license 134 and explicitly excluding transactions involving Cuba—along with Iran, North Korea, Crimea and other occupied regions of Ukraine—from a temporary easing of sanctions on Russian oil. The original license was aimed at alleviating the spiraling of energy prices triggered by the US-Israeli war of aggression against Iran.

In practice, this means that on Thursday the Trump administration added Cuba to the list of states barred from receiving Russian fuel, targeting precisely cargoes expected to arrive within days. The new license was clearly interpreted as a threat that the blockade would be enforced through a violent interdiction.

The *Sea Horse*'s retreat demonstrates Cuba's isolation. Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum claimed Thursday that her government is “evaluating alternatives” to continue sending oil to Cuba, but once again declined to provide details—exposing how complicity with Trump's sanctions is deeply discrediting her government's pretensions of being “leftist” and a defender of national sovereignty.

The blackout has also unfolded amid a deepening political crisis in Washington around the US drive for regime change in Havana. Following an earlier report in *USA Today*, the *New York Times*, citing four people familiar with the talks, revealed that the Trump administration has been negotiating

a scheme to oust Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel, and leave untouched the family of former presidents Fidel and Raúl Castro—Fidel died in 2016, and Raúl is 94.

Such a deal would echo developments in Venezuela, where US forces kidnapped President Nicolás Maduro on January 3 and have since worked with acting President Delcy Rodríguez, Maduro's former vice president.

The *Times* has stood by its reporting after Secretary of State Marco Rubio denounced the story as “fake news” to better conceal the maneuvers of US imperialism while preserving his own standing with the most hardline layers of the Cuban-American right opposed to the Castros.

On Tuesday, Rubio stressed that Cuban government concessions so far are inadequate, insisting that “they have to get new people in charge.”

Last week, Cuba acknowledged that it had opened talks with Washington, but the subsequent revelations have intensified the regime's crisis, pushing officials to deny any negotiation to change the “political system” or its personnel.

In reality, the scale of economic concessions already adopted—opening the country to international investors, including exile capital in Miami long associated with terrorist attacks and coup plots—demonstrates that the regime is prepared to bargain away everything but the privileges of the dominant sections of the ruling elite.

The collapse of the energy system coincided with the second day of a visit by an international delegation of some 650 activists from 33 countries, traveling in the Nuestra América Convoy by sea and air to deliver humanitarian aid, including solar panels and equipment for hospitals and emergency centers.

The convoy is backed by the Global Sumud Flotilla that attempted to deliver aid to Gaza. At the welcoming event, Díaz-Canel denounced the “genocidal, criminal and inhuman” blockade and warned of the threat of an armed aggression.

“We are prepared to give our lives defending the Revolution,” he proclaimed, lamenting Latin American politicians who are “licking the boots of the representatives of the empire” and “shamefully subordinating themselves to the orders to isolate Cuba.”

Reports that Havana's five-star Gran Hotel Bristol kept its lights on with generators while hospitals went dark on Saturday triggered widespread anger on social media. Right-wing media immediately seized on the scandal to smear the international delegations staying there after bringing humanitarian aid, exploiting convoy participant and former Spanish vice-president Pablo Iglesias' claim that the “situation is difficult, but not as it is being presented from outside.”

The humanitarian efforts are courageous and express genuine solidarity among the hundreds across different continents that donated and volunteered. However, such convoys provide only limited relief and cannot overcome an embargo overseen by an imperialist superpower 90 miles away with the complicity of governments worldwide.

Its main political effect has been to provide the nationalist bourgeois regime in Havana with an opportunity to cover up their political bankruptcy and wholesale capitulation to imperialism.

There is a transparent discrepancy between the regime's official rhetoric for domestic consumption and its real message to Trump and US capital.

The assault on Cuba is one front in a broader hemispheric offensive. Trump has explicitly combined the fuel strangulation of Cuba, the military attack on Caracas that ended with Maduro's kidnapping and stepped-up military operations under the banner of the “war on narco-terrorism.”

This strategy was advanced at the “Shield of the Americas” summit held at Trump's Miami golf course, where far-right Latin American leaders gathered around a program of fighting drug trafficking and migration and “containing China.”

In the context of the criminal war of aggression against Iran—aimed at toppling the regime born of the 1979 revolution that overthrew the US-backed Shah—the drive to unseat the regime born out of the 1959 Cuban Revolution is part of a campaign to “abolish the twentieth century,” to wipe out every conquest won by mass labor and national independence struggles following the Russian Revolution.

What is urgently required is the independent mobilization of the international working class to take control of the tankers, fuel supplies and humanitarian cargoes needed to break the embargo in its entirety, as part of a broader struggle against war and the escalating capitalist counterrevolution throughout the Americas and the world.



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