

*General Union Of Workers
In Petrochemicals & Gaz
Gaza Governorates
Palestine*



**النقابة العامة
للعمالين بالبترول والكيماويات والغاز**
محافظات غزة - فلسطين
عضو الإتحاد العام لعمال فلسطين
عضو الإتحاد العربي لعمال النفط والناجم والكيماويات

ELECTRICITY CRISIS IN GAZA STRIP

NOVEMBER 15, 2020

GENERAL UNION OF WORKERS IN PETROCHEMICALS & GAZ
Gaza-Palestine

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The Gaza Strip is the southern region of the Palestinian coastal plain on the Mediterranean Sea. The sector extends over an area of 360 square kilometers, its length is 41 km, and its width varies between 5 and 15 km. Israel borders the Gaza Strip to the north and east, while Egypt borders it to the southwest. The population of the besieged Gaza Strip is more than two million.

The Gaza Strip is subject to a stifling blockade imposed by Israel since the summer of 2007, and includes preventing or rationing the entry of fuel, building materials and many basic commodities, and preventing fishing in the depths of the sea.

The long and suffocating blockade resulted in the disruption of all factories and an increase in the unemployment rate to exceed 80%, becoming the highest unemployment rate in the world, in addition to an acute shortage of medicines and all medical materials, and the death of about 400 patients within 9 months only because they were unable to travel for treatment in other countries or due to a shortage. The equipment and medicines needed to treat them, and the construction movement was completely disrupted, which added to the crisis of the



homeowners that were destroyed in the war on Gaza by the Israeli occupation, which numbered more than 4,100 homes and apartment.

Due to the blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip and the prevention of Israel to allow sufficient quantities of fuel to enter, a serious crisis arose in the form of power cuts, and the crisis reached varying peaks in which electricity was cut off for periods of 16 hours per day or more, and until the complete shutdown of the only power station for long time.

The use of generators caused many casualties among the residents of the Gaza Strip, including dead, wounded and material damage, due to the danger of dealing with highly inflammable fuel. Or because of problems ventilating the exhaust fumes from it, and the death toll from the small generators reached dozens. Electricity cuts also affect aspects of life in Gaza in terms of its connection with the outside world, spoilage of foodstuffs, and material losses to stakeholders and shops.

The chronic shortage of electricity has worsened the situation in the Gaza Strip over the past thirteen years. With the Egyptian fuel smuggling stopped from spending at the border, the number of operating hours for the only power station in Gaza decreased, which affected various aspects of life. The biggest damage was caused to the health sector, which relies



mainly on electricity to operate sensitive medical equipment and monitor heart patients and most of patient with chronic disease, forcing hospitals to postpone some urgent surgeries. Insufficient electricity supplies have led to more water shortages in homes and water treatment plants to cut back their cycles as they rely mainly on electricity to run their pumps. Some Gazans have had to use unsafe backup generators that the poor cannot afford to cover the deficit caused by the constant power outages.

Energy sources

Since 2017, Gaza's normal energy needs are estimated by 400–600 Megabytes Watts to provide a complete 24–hour supply to all residents that are normally supplied from the electricity generation station in Gaza, that Diesel powered and its production rate is about 60–140 MW. Additional 125 MW imported from Israel through 10 power lines. And 27 MW of energy imported from Egypt.

Even under normal circumstances, the current supply from Gaza is insufficient to meet the growing needs. and the crisis has led to further closures and reduction for each of these energy sources.



To the brink of collapse

The municipalities of the Gaza Strip confirmed that their services have reached the brink of collapse due to the worsening economic, humanitarian and environmental conditions in the Gaza Strip, because of power cuts for long hours.

In a press conference, the municipalities indicated that the next stage will witness a reduction in the percentage of services, which will increase the catastrophic situation and the population will enter into successive crises, especially as we are on the threshold of the summer season, which will herald a water crisis in the Gaza Strip, suspension of the waste collection and transfer service, and the collapse of the sewage system, and the seashore remains completely closed.

The municipalities warned of the possibility of declaring the stopping of basic services, especially since the municipalities face great difficulties in providing the necessary revenues to purchase fuel for operating water wells, sewage stations, and various mechanisms and facilities.



Deep tragedy:

Thus, Gaza remains at a standstill in continuous and successive crises, barely emerging from one crisis but entering another one, and at the same time the world stands by watching this profound human tragedy, which is embodied in a practical reality, and the price of which is paid by the Palestinian citizen in the Gaza Strip, and the sick and children are at the forefront of the target.

Israel cannot abdicate its responsibilities:

Gaza residents only have electricity for three – four hours a day. The deterioration in the supply of electricity stems from the difficulty that the Electricity Authority faces.

Electricity reaches the Gaza Strip from three sources: Israel, Egypt and the Gaza power plant. In 2006, Israel bombed the station. Since then, it has saved almost half of its production capacity. And it faces difficulties in Pal work due to financial difficulties, and the most important difficulties faced by the authorities in the collection of fees of electricity consumption from the sector residents who have difficulty in paying its price because of the unemployment and extreme poverty. These difficulties have exacerbated since July 2013, when Egypt closed the tunnels. Under the



border between it and the Strip, since then the power plant has been forced to buy fuel from Israel at three times the price of Egyptian fuel.

The lack of regular electricity is generating disruptive consequences: routine power cuts harm medical equipment and hospitals that have to turn to generators and reduce the services they provide – including the delay of unimportant surgeries and early discharge of patients. The irregular supply of electricity also prevents the regular operation of water pumps and wells, which affects public institutions and the supply of water to homes that has been significantly reduced. Consequently, residents are forced to rely on private water providers who supply water with little quality. Sewage purification plants face difficulties in working, and therefore they have reduced treatment cycles, and the sewage is pumped into the sea after partial purification. In addition to the great negative impact on the industrial sector, hundreds of factories stopped working, which led to thousands of workers being unemployed, the high unemployment rate and widespread poverty.



Moreover, power cuts affect the ability of the residents of the Gaza Strip to reasonably carry out their daily lives. It does not allow regular use of washing machines, refrigerators, water heating tanks and more. All of these – which are an integral part of the lives of billions in the world, including those who live a few kilometers away from the residents of the Gaza Strip – can only be used during the few hours when there is electricity available. And this is in a world that depends on an organized electricity supply as a basic right.

Israel, which continues to control what is going on in the Gaza Strip from the outside, even after the now disengagement plan from the Strip, has a large part of the responsibility for this reality. It is preventing the restoration of the power station that it bombed in 2006. Thus, Israel is preventing the plant from operating to its full potential. And it obliges the residents of the Gaza Strip to buy fuel from it only, at a price comparable to the price paid inside Israel's borders. By virtue of the large gap between the economy of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and between the economy of Israel, the authority and the population face difficulty in bearing this price and purchasing the quantities of diesel required for them.



Israel is delaying or preventing the repair of faults in the electricity network and imposing restrictions on the entry of spare parts into the Gaza Strip and the restoration of the infrastructure that was damaged during the Israeli bombardment in the Gaza Strip. Also prevents improvement of old networks.

The Coordinator of the Israeli Government 's Activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, General Yoav Mordechai, hastened to evade any responsibility for the current electricity crisis.

However, the cut of regular supply of electricity in the Gaza Strip remains uninterrupted as the basis as a direct result of the policy of siege and closure explicit pursued by Israel towards Gaza citizens, which Coincides with the thirteen years on the blockade of the Gaza Strip. If Israel so wishes, it could change this policy and significantly improve the residents' quality of life. If Israel wishes, it will continue this cruel and unjustified policy.

Recommendations:

1- The International community is urged to act swiftly and vigorously to put pressure on the occupation authorities to end the blockade imposed



on the Gaza Strip, which deprives individuals and the movement of goods

of freedom of movement. And rescue more than two million people in the civilian sector, who are living in an unprecedented state of economic, political, and cultural strangulation by the policy of collective punishment and retribution.

2- We call on The United Nations to be aware of its responsibility to enable the Palestinians to be held accountable for the Palestinian cause since the General Assembly adopted partition resolution (181) and its recognition of the State of Israel.

3- We appeals to the high parties contracting the Geneva Conventions to stand up to their commitment under common Article (1), which requires respect for the conventions in all circumstances, as well as fulfilling their commitment under Articles (146) and (147) of the 4th Geneva Convention in 1949 in all circumstances and the same applies to the protection of civilians in times of war, which require prosecution and trial.

4- We call on The international community to take firm and decisive stances against the Israeli- policies which are supported by America and aimed at changing the situation in the occupied territories, especially the



policy of demolishing homes and displacing villages, with the blatant violations of international law that they represent, amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

5- We appeal he European Union to work to implement the standards related to human rights and to oblige it to comply with them as well as to respect its obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights in its dealings with the occupying power.