



Written by [David Kelly](#) on August 1, 2022

Communism's Failure Darkens Havana

Beginning this week, the Cuban capital of Havana will join the rest of the island nation in planned electricity blackouts as the country's energy crisis worsens, state media [reported](#) on Saturday.

The capital, home to a fifth of the nation's population of 11.2 million and the center of economic activity in Cuba, had been spared the daily power outages of four or more hours that the rest of the island has endured for months.

The blackouts reflect a deepening economic crisis that intensified with harsh new U.S. [sanctions](#) on the island and worsened with the pandemic, which devastated tourism. Blackouts sparked a few small local [protests](#) this summer, and a year ago in July fueled a day of unprecedented unrest across the country.



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In June, Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel blamed the island's economic problems on U.S. government sanctions, said the protests were the result of a subversion campaign directed from abroad, and called the loyal to take back the streets from protesters. "We are convoking all the country's revolutionaries, all the communists, to go into the streets, to all the places where they might replicate these provocations," he said. "The order to combat has been given."

Government supporters carrying bats alongside police began to break up the protests. Hundreds of Cubans were arrested — some for clashing with officials, others for merely filming the turmoil with their phones.

Last month, hundreds of Cuban students at a university in the city of Camagüey began a nighttime [demonstration](#) after power was cut in their dormitory. As seen on videos that the students uploaded to social media, they banged on pots and chanted "F**k these blackouts! Put the electricity on!" Cuban officials quickly turned on the lights.

Now the blackouts will affect all of Havana. A schedule of power outages will mean each of Havana's six municipalities will have its electricity cut every three days during peak midday hours, according to the local Communist Party daily, *Tribuna de la Habana*, which reported on a meeting of local authorities.

Cubans are suffering from increasing food and medicine shortages, long lines to purchase scarce goods, high prices, and transportation woes. The blackouts have only added to their frustration, leading to a large wave of Cubans leaving the island. Many are trying to [cross by land](#) from Mexico to the United States. In April alone, U.S. authorities recorded more than 35,000 Cuban nationals at the southwest border — almost as many as the entire 2021 fiscal year, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection.



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“This is the moment to show solidarity and contribute so that the rest of Cuba suffers less from the undesirable blackouts,” Havana Communist Party leader Luis Antonio Torres stated to the Tribuna.

Torres and others at the meeting insisted they were acting in solidarity with fellow Cubans, not from necessity, and announced other measures such as mass vacations to shutter state-run companies, working from home, and a 20% cut in energy allocations for private businesses with high energy use. They even cancelled a carnival that was due to take place next month.

Jorge Pinon, director of the Latin America and Caribbean Energy and Environment Program at the University of Texas at Austin, offered a different [assessment](#) than Torres. He shared that Cuba’s infrastructure is crumbling, with two out of Cuba’s 20 coal-fired power plants destroyed by fire. Pinon contends that Cuba’s rotting infrastructure has robbed citizens of any standard of living and left most plagued by high unemployment, with the government continuing to make empty promises.

“When you keep running the equipment past its capital maintenance schedule it falls into a downward spiral with no short-term solution. The announced scheduled blackouts are not in solidarity but rather a necessity to avoid a possible total collapse of the system,” Pinon said.

Cuba fell to communism through revolution in 1959, and remains the only officially communist country outside of Asia. Havana has put on a good act for American tourists over the years, exposing to them a “thriving” communist society. But with the blackouts, proof of the abysmal failure of communism is now much more apparent for all to see.



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