**Gaza Electricity Crisis Fact Sheet**

*Compiled by Tamsin Avra*

Executive Summary

Gaza’s damaged power plant operated at a fraction of its capacity until it ran out of fuel entirely in mid-April. Due to political tensions between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, the PA will no longer pay for fuel for the plant to be transferred to Gaza from Israel. Power supplied from Israel and Egypt are unreliable, and Gazans now live with about four hours of power per day.

Key Details

* On April 27, 2017, the Palestinian Authority told Israel it will no longer pay for the electricity supplied by Israel to Gaza
  + This could lead to a complete shutdown in Gaza
  + Already, the 2 million people in Gaza live with about four hours of electricity a day
* The PA is hardening its policy towards Hamas
  + The PA and Hamas are currently struggling over a unity deal that could weaken Hamas, which won control of Gaza in 2007
* The PA purchases fuel from Israel for Gaza because Israel does not engage with Hamas
  + COGAT: Israel supplies fuel to Gaza through 10 power lines (which carry 125 megawatts total), that supply 30% of Gaza’s electricity
    - 400 megawatts of power daily are needed to ensure 24-hour supply to Gaza residents
  + Israel (Israel Electric Corporation) charges approximately $11 million per month for electricity, deducting the sum from the transfers of Palestinian tax revenues that Israel collects on the PA’s behalf.
* Sole power-generating plant is now non-functional – ran out of fuel on April 17th, 2017
  + Gaza power plant began operating in 2002
    - Its maximum capacity of 140 megawatts was limited by capacity of relay network
    - In June 2006, power plant manufactured 90 megawatts per day and IEC provided another 120 (brokered by PA)
    - After Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit was captured in June 2006, Israel bombed the power plant, which supplied 43% of Gaza’s electricity at that time.
    - In response to the resulting power shortage, Egypt began providing 17 megawatts to Gaza (brokered by PA)
    - The plant was rebuilt in 2007 and was operating at a maximum capacity of 80 megawatts (dependent on IEC, and on Israel to allow the transfer of rebuilding materials)
    - In October 2007, after Hamas won control of Gaza, Israel began limiting amount of diesel PA could transfer to Gaza
      * The amount was defined as a “humanitarian minimum” – 2.2 million liters of diesel per week
      * This was the amount Israel allowed to enter Gaza until 2009 (enough for 63% of the power plants fuel needs)
    - At the end of 2009, the EU stopped funding the PA’s purchase of Israeli fuel for the Gaza power plant
    - No Israeli fuel for the power plant has been transferred to Gaza since 2011
      * Since then, the plant has used Egyptian diesel purchased by Gaza Energy Authority and transferred through tunnels
      * During the 2011 unrest in Egypt, the transfer of diesel was very inconsistent
  + Even when the power plant’s two turbines were operational, they only produced 60 megawatts (added to 125 megawatts from Israel and 25 megawatts from Egypt, 190 more megawatts needed to ensure 24-hour supply)
* Egyptian power lines supply electricity sporadically due to instability in Sinai Peninsula
* In recent months, Hamas used Qatari and Turkish funding to pay the PA for the fuel it brokered from Israel, but can no longer afford it because of increased PA taxation
  + Tax-free donations from Qatar and Turkey ran out last week, PA won’t waive the fuel
* Hamas says PA is imposing unfair taxes, PA says Hamas is incapable of running power plant efficiently
  + Gaza power authority Deputy Chairman Fathi al-Sheikh Khalil says that fuel taxes imposed by PA more than double the cost of electricity
  + PA says that Hamas must improve tax collection rate, Hamas says the Gazans are too poor to pay taxes
* Residents currently receive around six hours of electricity a day, which could be reduced to four hours a day
* In January, following protests in Gaza sparked by lack of electricity, Qatar and Turkey agreed to provide a three-month supply of fuel for the power plant (enough for 6-12 hours of electricity a day)
* On April 27th, the UN announced that it had allocated $500,000 for the purchase of emergency fuel for Gaza hospitals
* Regaining control over Gaza could give Mahmoud Abbas more leverage in peace talks
  + Abbas has refused to lower taxes until Hamas cedes power
* Israel has approved a new high-voltage line to Gaza to operate desalination plants for clean water, as well as a natural gas pipeline for electricity, but both initiatives will take years.
* A Fatah-led delegation is expected to travel to Gaza later this month to discuss reunification efforts with Hamas
* Maj. Gen. Yoav Mordechai, head of the Israeli military authority responsible for Gaza, warned international aid organizations that electricity shortages paired with water purification will cause an even worse humanitarian crisis
* Gazans relied on small fuel-operated generators, then rechargeable batteries (inverters), now solar energy is popular, but most cannot afford it
* Nickolay Mladenov, UN special coordinator for Mid-East peace process called on Israel to ease the entry of materials for repairs and maintenance of grid and power plant, and on Egypt to repair and upgrade its power lines to Gaza

Sources

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