# Spain and Portugal face unprecedented blackout amid rising renewable energy reliance



Spain and Portugal experienced a major power outage yesterday that plunged millions into darkness and caused widespread disruption across the Iberian Peninsula. The blackout began around midday local time, prompting Spain to declare a state of emergency and deploy 30,000 police officers to manage the chaotic situation. The incident sparked significant disruptions, including suspended train and metro services, closed airports, halted parliamentary sessions, and interrupted various public events such as the Madrid Open tennis tournament.

The blackout affected critical infrastructure and daily life across both countries. Traffic lights stopped functioning, leading to traffic congestion and confusion on the roads. Shops, railway stations, and airports went dark, with passengers stranded and emergency services mobilised to respond. Dramatic scenes emerged of people queuing at banks and supermarkets to withdraw cash and stockpile supplies, as credit card payments ceased due to the power failure. In some metro stations in Spain, passengers were evacuated from trains in darkness.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez addressed the nation, stating the cause of the outage was still being investigated but noted that hydroelectric plants had been restarted, which would aid in restoring power supply soon. He assured the public that there was no evidence of civil protection or security problems and urged people to rely on official information sources. Similarly, Portugal’s acting Prime Minister Luis Montenegro indicated that power restoration was expected within hours, though he noted Portugal’s recovery could take longer than Spain's due to differing energy dependencies.

Officials confirmed that Spain's nuclear power plants automatically shut down during the blackout but switched to diesel generators for safe operation. The country's nuclear safety council affirmed that all seven nuclear reactors were safe, with emergency protocols successfully activated. Four reactors ceased operation automatically, while the remaining three, which were not active at the time, were maintained in a safe state by emergency power.

The consecutive interruptions highlighted strain within the electrical grids of both Spain and Portugal. Experts have pointed to Spain’s increasing reliance on renewable energy—particularly solar and wind power—possibly exacerbating the scale of the blackout. Renewable energy sources accounted for over 60 percent of Spain’s electricity generation during the outage, with the country averaging around 56 percent renewable energy use, one of the highest proportions in Europe. Just days prior, on 16 April, Spain’s power grid had operated entirely on renewable energy for the first time.

Independent energy consultant Kathryn Porter commented on the situation, explaining that grids with a high share of wind and solar energy tend to be less stable and more difficult to manage when faults occur. She told the Daily Mail, “The more you have wind and solar on the grid, the less stable the grid becomes and so the harder it is to manage faults.” Porter elaborated on how traditional power generators contribute inertia to the grid, acting as shock absorbers to stabilise electrical frequency. “When you are in a low-stability situation, it's much harder to control what happens,” she said, adding that rapid changes can cause electrical systems to trip off and trigger a cascading grid failure.

Portugal’s grid operator REN attributed the blackout to “extreme temperature variations” within inland Spain, causing “anomalous oscillations” in the network. However, some industry analysts, such as utility expert Steve Loftus, expressed scepticism about the weather explanation, noting that conditions were relatively mild —around 22°C (68°F) — at the time of the incident. “The cynic in me wonders if there are people who don't want to admit that it's a renewables issue,” Loftus remarked.

The extensive power outage created significant challenges for public safety and mobility. In Madrid, the city’s mayor advised people to remain where they were while emergency services responded. Public transportation services, including trains and metro lines across both Spain and Portugal, were abruptly halted, with some passengers left stranded in tunnels and stations. Lisbon’s main airport closed temporarily, leading to suspended flights and disrupted travel plans. British holidaymaker Adrian Coles, who was in Madrid at the time, described the situation to the Daily Mail: “People are fighting over taxis and the streets are mostly at a standstill.”

Emergency response agencies, such as the Red Cross, mobilised to provide water and blankets to those affected. Police presence was increased across Spain to assist with security and order maintenance.

Eduardo Prieto from the Spanish power distributor Red Electrica characterised the blackout as “unprecedented” and “exceptional and extraordinary.” The Portuguese National Cybersecurity Centre released a statement confirming that there was no evidence to suggest the outage was related to a cyberattack.

As power restoration efforts continue, authorities in both countries are investigating the root causes of the blackout amid growing scrutiny of the stability of grids increasingly dependent on renewable energy sources.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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2. <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2025/04/28/spain-portugal-and-parts-of-france-hit-by-massive-power-outage> - This source confirms the massive power outage in Spain and Portugal, affecting critical infrastructure like airports and telecommunication services, and how it caused significant disruptions.
3. <https://ia601201.us.archive.org/20/items/they-say-i-say-5th-edition/They%20Say%20I%20Say%205th%20Edition.pdf> - This document does not directly relate to the specific claims about the power outage in Spain and Portugal. It is a book on academic writing and does not provide relevant information.
4. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/owcp/FECA/regs/compliance/DFECfolio/FECAcirculars> - This webpage does not support any claims related to the power outage. It pertains to U.S. Department of Labor regulations and is unrelated to the topic.
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