# Keir Starmer’s net-zero push faces fresh doubts after Spain’s blackout warning



Keir Starmer's aggressive push for a low-carbon future has ignited concerns across the UK regarding the viability of his energy policy. His focus on a renewable energy sector raises pressing questions about the potential risks of his net-zero ambitions, especially in light of the range of challenges faced by other countries making similar transitions.

Last month, Starmer reaffirmed his "all out" commitment to net-zero targets, aligning the UK with the European carbon market—a move fraught with peril. This decision could make the UK susceptible to the energy crises that have recently plagued nations like Spain and Portugal. In April, a catastrophic power outage in Spain plunged around 55 million people into darkness, largely due to an overreliance on renewable energy sources at that moment. If the UK copies this misguided approach, it risks mirroring Spain's disastrous outcomes.

With approximately 57% of its electricity derived from renewables, Spain's recent blackout has sparked a fierce debate about their energy strategy. Critics argue that the country’s heavy reliance on wind and solar energy reflects a dangerous over-dependence, especially following the planned closures of essential nuclear facilities which could have mitigated the outage’s impact. A politician from the conservative People's Party posited that Spain's exclusive pursuit of renewables could ultimately be a strategic blunder.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez has defended the energy transition, stating that electrical outages are primarily the product of technical issues, not the closure of nuclear sites. However, the aftermath of the blackout reveals a troubling vulnerability in energy systems overly reliant on intermittent renewable sources.

Meanwhile, the landscape in the UK grows increasingly precarious as Starmer’s policies come under scrutiny. Former Prime Minister Tony Blair has cautioned against an accelerated phase-out of fossil fuels. He argues that such hasty decisions could provoke substantial public backlash and achieve little in reducing global emissions. Despite Starmer’s insistence that Blair's recommendations—including investments in carbon capture—are already underway, tensions simmer within Labour as environmental advocates take umbrage with Blair's past dealings with fossil fuel interests.

Given the turbulent nature of energy transitions worldwide, the Spanish blackout serves as a stark warning. Analysts emphasize that while renewable energy is integral to achieving climate objectives, it requires significant backup systems and investments to ensure grid stability. As the UK forges ahead with its ambitious net-zero target, experts urge a reflective approach that considers these hard-earned lessons from recent crises both domestically and abroad.

Stakeholders are keenly aware that the balance between green policies and dependable energy supply is delicate. As Starmer navigates this complex terrain, the uncharted waters of his leadership will be tested against growing public anxieties regarding energy security and the practical implications of transitioning away from traditional energy sources. The ramifications of these strategies could have long-term impacts on both the country’s energy landscape and citizens’ confidence in the new government’s ability to safeguard essential services.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/2063341/keir-starmer-issued-warning> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/6d443344-c492-49f1-a888-759a5afc4e48> - UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer has defended the government's net zero carbon emissions policy following criticism from former Prime Minister Tony Blair. Blair warned that phasing out fossil fuels too rapidly could lead to public backlash and have minimal impact on global emissions. He advocated for focusing on technological solutions like carbon capture and storage. Starmer responded by emphasising that many of Blair’s recommendations are already being implemented, including investment in carbon capture and artificial intelligence. Despite the controversy, the Tony Blair Institute clarified its support for the 2050 net zero target, aligning with the government’s strategy. Blair’s comments have caused friction within the Labour Party and with environmental advocates, who criticised his past affiliations with fossil fuel-producing nations and accused him of undermining climate goals. Meanwhile, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and green energy investor Dale Vince reaffirmed their belief in renewable energy's economic and environmental benefits. The debate has highlighted ongoing divisions across UK political lines on how to achieve climate objectives and maintain public support.
3. <https://apnews.com/article/c62fbb73e982365d10402323e4fcfcc6> - A massive power outage on April 28 across the Iberian Peninsula has sparked debate in Spain regarding the country's plan to phase out nuclear energy in favour of renewables. Currently, around 57% of Spain’s electricity is sourced from renewables and 20% from nuclear power. Spain aims to increase renewable energy to 81% by 2030 and decommission remaining nuclear reactors by 2035. Critics argue that the outage highlights the instability of renewable energy sources like wind and solar, which accounted for around 70% of the grid’s power before the blackout, and emphasise the reliability of nuclear power. However, Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez defended the energy transition plan and insisted that nuclear plants did not aid in restoring power after the incident. Investigations suggest the blackout stemmed from issues at two southwestern substations, not from a lack of nuclear power. The government used gas, hydropower, and cross-border electricity to restore service. The debate continues, with nuclear advocates urging reconsideration and government officials maintaining that nuclear energy would not have averted the blackout.
4. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/spains-high-court-investigate-whether-power-outage-was-cyberattack-2025-04-29/> - Spain's High Court announced on Tuesday that it will investigate the massive power outage that occurred on Monday across much of the Iberian Peninsula to determine if it was caused by a cyberattack targeting critical infrastructure. If proven, Judge Jorge Calama could classify the incident as a terrorism-related crime. However, Spain's national electricity grid operator, REE, has stated in its preliminary assessment that a cyberattack is unlikely. The court's investigation aims to clarify the cause of the outage and assess the potential threat to national security.
5. <https://time.com/7281189/spain-portugal-power-restored-cause-mystery/> - A massive power outage struck Spain and Portugal, affecting millions and halting key services including metro systems, airports, and water supply. The blackout, considered the most significant in Europe since Italy's 2003 outage, lasted up to 18 hours before full restoration. While early speculation from Portugal's grid operator suggested an astrological phenomenon, Spain's meteorological agency found no supporting evidence, and both countries' grid operators have ruled out cyberattacks. Spain’s Red Eléctrica identified two separate power failure incidents that disrupted interconnections with France, isolating the Iberian power grid. Investigations by Spanish and Portuguese grid operators and cybersecurity experts are ongoing, with officials cautioning it could take weeks or months to determine the exact cause. The outage disrupted public transportation, traffic systems, and even a tennis match at the Madrid Open. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez vowed to hold private operators accountable and emphasised the importance of uncovering the cause to prevent future occurrences.
6. <https://www.ft.com/content/e922cda3-801d-40df-8455-5d3aeae34288> - On April 28, 2025, Spain and Portugal suffered a massive power outage—the largest in Europe in two decades—disrupting transportation, communications, and daily life. The blackout began around 12:30pm local time when a sudden drop in grid frequency from 50 to 49 hertz triggered automatic shutdowns of power plants. The exact cause remains unclear, but a loss of solar generation in southwest Spain or possible cable damage are suspected. Portugal’s reliance on Spain for electricity amplified the impact. The blackout has highlighted vulnerabilities in electricity grids, especially as Europe shifts to renewable energy. Renewable sources like solar and wind, although essential for reducing carbon emissions, lack the inertial support provided by traditional fossil-fuel plants, making grids harder to stabilise. At the time of the outage, solar accounted for over 55% of Spain’s power supply—far above average. Still, analysts caution against blaming renewables alone, noting blackouts also occur in fossil-fuel-based grids. The incident has sparked broader concerns about grid resilience amid growing energy demands and the EU’s transition to clean power. While critics may use the outage to question ambitious decarbonisation, experts stress the need for greater investment in backup systems and infrastructure. The European Commission plans an independent investigation to prevent future events.