

Abkhazia Loses Electricity as Russian Support Dwindles

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A view shows the Amra Yacht Club in Sukhum, Abkhazia. **Dmitry Feoktistov / TASS**

Georgia's breakaway region of Abkhazia was left without electricity Wednesday as critically low water levels triggered an emergency shutdown at its hydropower station and Russia allegedly withheld millions in financial aid.

The energy crisis comes days after Abkhazia's leader resigned and lawmakers [scrapped](#) a controversial Russian investment deal that sparked protests in the Black Sea region in November.

Abkhazia had been purchasing electricity from Russia since Nov. 1 due to an energy deficit caused by low water levels at the Enguri dam, which supplies the region's largest hydroelectric facility. However, the volume of electricity imported from Russia fell short of covering the region's needs, prompting authorities to impose daily 10-hour power cuts from Monday.

“Due to the critically low water level and its insufficient inflow, the emergency protection system was activated and the hydroelectric power station stopped,” the state-owned power company Chernomorenergo [said](#) Wednesday. “Currently, there is no electricity throughout the entire territory of the republic.”

Abkhazian authorities said Russia [suspended](#) its financial aid to the cash-strapped region on Dec. 5, including crucial funding for the energy sector.

Russia has not commented on Abkhazia’s claims that Moscow unilaterally withheld 1.8 billion rubles (approximately \$18 million) in funding.

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Media previously [reported](#) that Russia was now selling electricity to Abkhazia at market rates after the region failed to fulfill its commitments, which included ratifying the Russian investment deal.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov [said](#) Tuesday that Moscow was “in regular talks” with its partners in Abkhazia over both the Russian aid and the scrapped Russian investment deal.

The so-called “apartments bill” would have lifted the region’s ban on foreign ownership of residential property, allowing Russians to purchase real estate on the Black Sea coast.

Abkhazia’s acting Prime Minister Valery Bganba previously admitted the possibility of introducing a state of emergency in its energy sector, while acting President Badra Gunba said there were “very serious difficulties in ensuring the country’s energy security.”

Russia has backed Abkhazia and Georgia’s other breakaway territory of South Ossetia since fighting a five-day war against Tbilisi in 2008.

Moscow in November advised its citizens not to travel to Abkhazia, a popular holiday destination for many Russians.

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