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Abkhazia Appeals for Free Russian Electricity Supplies Amid Rolling Blackouts

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A view of Sukhum at night. **Dmitry Feoktistov / TASS**

Georgia's breakaway region of Abkhazia has appealed for authorities in Moscow to supply free electricity next year, the Black Sea region's energy and transportation minister told Russian media Wednesday.

Russia suspended financial aid to Abkhazia in September and ordered the cash-strapped region to buy Russian energy at market rates. Russia has not publicly commented on Abkhazia's claims that Moscow unilaterally withheld 1.8 billion rubles (approximately $18 million) in funding.

"Back in October, Abkhazia asked Russia to supply social [free] electricity for 2025 to the amount of 327 million kilowatt-hours," acting Energy and Transportation Minister Dzhansukh Nanba told the state-run news agency RIA Novosti.

“We have not yet received any response,” he was quoted as saying, noting that Abkhazia had fulfilled “all technical procedures” on its side. Nanba also said Abkhazia has been able to purchase only 165 million kilowatt-hours for 655 million Russian rubles ($6.3 million) since November.

Last month, opposition protests forced out Abkhazia’s Moscow-backed leader and pressured lawmakers to scrap a controversial Russian investment deal.

Abkhazia currently operates under a rolling blackout plan, with only 2 hours and 48 minutes of electricity supplied during the day. Electricity is turned back on between 9 p.m. and 7 a.m.

Alexandra Panina, a member of the board at Russia’s energy supplier Inter RAO, told RIA Novosti that Russia supplies electricity to Abkhazia under a prepaid contract that expires on Dec. 31, 2024. She said the sides had not discussed extending the contract.

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