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Utility Failures Plagued Russia During January Cold Snap – Report

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Yegor Aleyev / TASS

Russia saw a sharp rise in utility outages during January, with power, heating and water cuts across the country up twofold year-on-year, the exiled outlet Novaya Gazeta Europe reported Monday.

The newspaper counted 1,788 reports of disruptions nationwide in January compared with 983 in the same month a year earlier. Power outages were the most frequent, accounting for 723 reports, followed by heating cuts (552) and water supply failures (513).

Compared with January 2025, confirmed outages during freezing conditions doubled for electricity and heating, while water disruptions rose by about 50%, according to the paper's analysis.

Russia's Belgorod region, which has been subject to regular cross-border shelling, recorded the highest number of incidents, with 143 cases over the winter.

Other regions with high numbers included the Krasnodar region (138), the Murmansk region (105), the republic of Dagestan (76), the Kaluga region (76) and the Ryazan region (74).

Construction, Housing and Utilities Minister Irek Faizullin has previously estimated that wear and tear on utility networks ranges from 40% to 80% depending on the region.

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Only about 2% of infrastructure is renewed annually, although twice that rate is needed just to halt further deterioration, lawmaker Alexander Yakubovsky has said.

Despite aging infrastructure and widespread breakdowns, the government's three-year budget sees a gradual reduction in spending on housing and utilities. Funding for the sector stands at 1.999 trillion rubles ($26.0 billion) this year, falling to 1.399 trillion rubles ($18.2 billion) next year and 1.413 trillion rubles ($18.4 billion) in 2028.

In Krasnodar, heavy snowfall over the New Year's period left more than 84,000 customers without electricity in the town of Belorechensk, according to local authorities. One resident said the blackout lasted for a week.

In the Murmansk region, regional capital Murmansk and the nearby closed city of Severomorsk lost power on Jan. 23 after five electricity pylons collapsed, four of them more than 40 years old. Power was cut again on Jan. 31 after emergency repairs.

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Frequent outages were also reported in the Belgorod region, where Ukrainian forces struck two thermal power plants and the Storozhevaya substation on Jan. 9, leaving about 556,000 people without electricity, authorities said.

Dagestan was among the regions hardest hit by water supply failures. In the city of Kaspiysk, several apartment blocks were without water from Jan. 2 to Jan. 19, while residents of other major towns complained of similar problems on social media.

Heating disruptions were widespread in January in the Zabaikalsky region, where residents of the settlement of Atamanovka spent the New Year without heat after a pipeline accident left around 3,000 people affected for nearly a week.

Another major heating main ruptured on Jan. 21 in the settlement of Darasun.

The Volgograd region also saw repeated heating outages, with residents saying a gas pipeline accident caused indoor temperatures to drop to as low as 11 degrees Celsius, with ice forming on windows.

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