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Ukraine is bracing for the harshest winter since 2022



For the fourth winter in a row, Russia is plunging Ukraine into darkness and cold, shelling its energy infrastructure that is already on its last legs.

Many in energy circles are worried that this winter will be the most difficult since 2022, when the **Russian army** literally destroyed major **power generation** facilities in Ukraine.

Even without the war, it would take tens of years to repair those facilities. But the shelling stopped only to resume before the cold season.

“Today we face the challenge of getting through the most difficult heating season since the start of the full-scale war, as the enemy is ferociously and systematically attacking all energy and heat generation facilities at once – with large-scale drone and missile strikes aimed at destroying and dismantling critical infrastructure,” concluded **Kyiv mayor** Vitaliy Klychko.

Bracing for the worst

Over the past two weeks, Russia has relentlessly attacked not only Ukraine’s power grid but also its gas and logistics infrastructure.

At least two transformer substations have been struck in Kharkiv, along with the Seredniodniprovska Hydroelectric Plant, a DTEK thermal power station, and multiple gas supply hubs in major cities.

Gas extraction facilities have also been heavily hit. As a result of these strikes on the Kharkiv and Poltava regions, about 60% of Ukraine’s gas production capacity has been destroyed.

This was the most extensive assault on the country’s gas extraction infrastructure since the start of the full-scale invasion.

Across the country, cities are bracing for the worst. In many regions, the start of the heating season has been postponed by two weeks – from mid-October to early November.

Ukrainians are once again stocking up on power banks, generators, and portable Wi-Fi, preparing to spend long hours—even days—in darkness

“The situation in the country right now is such that we won’t be able to start the heating season for the next few weeks. We need to wait a bit to make sure everything is done properly – so that we actually have warmth in winter,” said Lviv mayor Andrii Sadovyi.

The mayor of Lviv has urged residents to prepare alternative sources of heat and to support those unable to do so on their own.

Since October 11, the city has been operating in testing mode. As part of these preparations, even traffic lights were temporarily disconnected from the main grid and switched to backup power to ensure they would keep functioning during a potential blackout.

Some mayors urgently redirect **local budgets** to keep hospitals, schools, and kindergartens running amid partial or total blackouts. Ukrainians are once again stocking up on power banks, generators, and portable Wi-Fi, preparing to spend long hours – even days – in darkness.

A prolonged blackout means far more than just darkness

In Kryvyi Rih, Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s hometown, tens of thousands of residents risk being left without heat this winter. In the northern **Chernihiv region**, which borders Russia, it took several days to restore power, leaving more than 55,000 people in the dark. **Power outages** have been introduced in almost every region of Ukraine – even in the west.

“When the emergency outages began, it turned out to be the hardest day of the week for me. We were without power for eight hours, then had two hours of light, and then another four of darkness. It was my first such

experience,” says journalist Tetiana Ankudinova, who fled to Germany as a refugee in 2022 and has since returned, now living in a private home in the Kyiv region. “I’m testing batteries and generators, but the blackouts do bring a kind of discipline — they make you act faster, get things done before the next cut.”

Her small town outside Kyiv keeps going despite the blackouts. Shops and hospitals run on generators, and children still walk to school — even without electricity.

After thirty hours without power, I found myself without water, heating, or even a mobile signal

For those living in high-rise buildings, a prolonged blackout means far more than just darkness — it cuts off water, heat, and eventually communication.

Without electricity, pumps can push water only up to the 10th or 12th floor, and when the outage stretches beyond a day, mobile networks begin to fail.

I remember this vividly from 2022, when I lived on the 15th floor in Kyiv. After thirty hours without power, I found myself without water, heating, or even a mobile signal. All around me, hundreds of families were facing the same.

Today, generators hum across Ukraine — in cities and villages alike, wherever it’s possible. Since 2022, some have chosen to move into houses, even old ones, simply to regain a sense of autonomy.

The wealthier have covered their rooftops with solar panels, while in places without gas supply, residents are doing everything they can to get it connected.

Survival, not recovery

Yet economic hardship brings another layer of difficulty. In the first half of October, Ukraine ramped up electricity imports from Europe to

record levels. Import capacity reached 2.1 GW — the highest in recent months — helping the country build reserves in case domestic generation is hit during further attacks.

Electricity output from gas-turbine and gas-piston units has also surged, rising by 270% since the start of the year. The number of energy storage installations has grown substantially.



By destroying power plants, gas fields, and logistics hubs, Russia is deliberately blocking Ukraine’s recovery

At the same time, as Russia continues to target **Ukraine’s gas infrastructure**, the country now needs roughly €2 billion to secure additional gas imports. Kyiv is covering part of this sum from its own budget — though the exact share remains undisclosed — and has turned to international partners for support.

The **EBRD** and **EIB** have already agreed to step in with financing, while Norway has pledged a €150 million grant and **Germany** an additional €60 million.

Still, even this support may not be enough. If the war drags on, Ukraine will likely have to seek new foreign grants next year to stay afloat.

Vladimir Putin knows that a war of attrition isn’t only about weapons — it’s about grinding down the opponent’s economy. By destroying power plants, gas fields, and logistics hubs, Russia is deliberately blocking Ukraine’s recovery.

The **International Monetary Fund** has acknowledged that Russia’s ongoing strikes on

Ukraine's energy infrastructure and civilian areas have "significantly dented" the country's growth outlook – projecting real GDP to rise by only 2% in 2025 and 4.5% in 2026.

Ukraine survives on foreign aid, the coordinated efforts of its state and private energy companies, and the sheer resilience of ordinary citizens. But this is survival, not recovery.

As long as Russia keeps targeting the energy system, Ukraine's economy will remain trapped in a cycle of destruction and emergency repair.