

Why energy is Israel's weak spot

As the conflict in the Middle East escalates, keeping the lights on is becoming a national security priority.

By [Gabriel Gavin](#) / August 28, 2024

The darkness that fell over Israel earlier this year underlined the vulnerability of the country's energy system.

For hours at a time, neighborhoods in Tel Aviv, nearby Petah Tikva and the southern city of Beersheba were left without electricity while trains ground to a halt and the government [drew up lists](#) of essential equipment needed in case of prolonged power outages.

The disruption was blamed on a series of faults — despite an international hacking group attempting to take credit — but whatever the cause, it underscored a fragility that has kept the country's national security chiefs awake at night for decades.

Now, former Deputy National Security Advisor **Chuck Freilich** told POLITICO that escalating tensions on the border with Lebanon could take a toll on the power grid. Israeli forces this week struck at the Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah in the south of the country, hitting over 270 targets.

"If Hezbollah decides they're going to attack power plants and other sites, it's a big problem," he said. "They have precise missiles that can target civilian infrastructure, and it's hard to run a modern country without electricity and without computers."

[...]

"The big question is what do the Turks do," said Freilich, the former national security official. "Most of Israel's oil comes via pipelines to Turkey, and if they wanted they could cut off the spigot."

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