

War-ravaged Lebanon turns to Arab neighbours for electricity relief

Country on verge of finalising a pan-Arab power agreement with the Arab League, energy minister says

John Benny / Dec. 14, 2024

Lebanon is close to signing a pan-Arab power agreement that could help prevent severe blackouts in the country as it faces reconstruction amid a fragile ceasefire deal with Israel.

The Lebanese Ministry of Energy and Water has approved the electricity market agreement and is now awaiting the government's final approval to “authorise the signature”, minister Walid Fayad told The National in an emailed statement.

[...]

“Gulf rulers have an interest in political stability in Arab countries and energy infrastructure is their opportunity to support it,” said **Ilan Zelayat, Gulf researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies and Tel Aviv University's Moshe Dayan Centre.**

Gulf nations have become increasingly proactive in regional affairs, aiming to foster stability and mediate conflicts. They have offered financial assistance to struggling nations, invested in regional infrastructure programmes and participated in diplomatic efforts to settle disputes.

However, the groundwork for the agreement was laid decades ago when Bahrain, the UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Oman commissioned a study in 1986 to explore the idea of connecting electricity grids across the Middle East.

Subsequent research laid out a road map and in 2001, the GCC Interconnection Authority (GCCIA) was formed. By 2011, all GCC countries were connected, with the exception of Oman, which was linked up the following year.

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