

Photo Essay on Power Blackout & Rationing –Sep 09

What do people in Addis Ababa say about the continuing power rationing? We recently hit the road and talked to a number of ordinary Addis Ababans to gauge the feeling on the street. Their answers (in their own words) follow.

Debebe Sabelu. Age 45. Works in a small shoe factory around Akaki.

The company I am working pays according to power availability and times worked. My daily expenses have grown up because of high price of food. I have two children and my grandmother is living with us at home. At times, we go to our bed after we boil some corn or toast it for a supper. It is very very difficult.



Kalid Abemed. Age 36. He works as a waiter for a medium fast food corner around Bole. He came from Woliso a couple of years ago.

There is a significant decrease in our regular customer base. As you know, my income will also decline related to the number of customers of our fast food. The tips helped me a lot surviving the expensive life of Addis Ababa. Since the power rationing started, our customers started to show a lot of reservation on the hygienic conditions of our staff because of power cuts and food being spoilt in the process. The rumor of food poisoning is affecting much of the fast food restaurants all over Addis and ours is also the victim.



Mimi Birhanu. Age 26. She works as a secretary for a private company importing and exporting different products.

The Ethiopian Power Corporation EEPSCO provides little or no information on the schedules of power cut. It is irritating and made me lose a lot of interest on my job. Our company is too small and it can not afford to buy generator.



Ayehu Tesfa. Age 39. Economist. He works for the EEA as a senior researcher.

I believe this country is not in power shortage as the government says claiming that we have on 'power crises'. I am wondering how such a big corporation with hundreds of years of history couldn't be able to forecast the change in power demand. It is a real scandal by any measure. No doubt it affected our GDP this year.



Biniam Tesfaye. Age 21. Mobile-phone maintenance center. Technician.

I can't maintain my several mobile apparatuses without power. So I am losing my customers. I need the problem to end; other wise I will lose my business. I was able to secure some loan from Microfinance. Now I am not sure if I will be able to pay re-imbusement for my creditors. I have a poor mother to support at home. I may probably end up being a gang member. What else can I do?



Sheik Ali Hussen. Age 62. Owns an Electronic shop and sells Generators from China and Korea.

Our business is booming! After the power shortage or crises what ever you call it, our customers are increasing day to day. My son has traveled to China more than three times this year only.



Debebe H. Michael. Age 42. Carpenter. Father of five children.

Our work is badly hit by the power shortage. We bought generator, but the fuel cost and the noise of the generator make our work uncomfortable.



Meron Tademe. Age 13. Grade 9 Student.

We are learning only half of the plasma lesson only. Our teachers are trying to solve this problem by giving tutorial class but it will not solve all the problems. The plasma TVs are sitting idle most of the time.



Teshome Hunduma. Age 17. Barber.

As you know, my machine doesn't work without power. So I am looking for another job if the problem doesn't solve soon.



Fasil Alemu. Movie Renting:

If there is no power at home, my customers will not rent our movies. Now, we are working only to cover our rent expense.



Shemsu Mudi, Age 17. Small shop owner:

We now sell more candles and matches than ever before.



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