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Algeria's Solar-Panel Imports Just Collapsed 46%. That's the Warning Sudan Needs Before 2033.

Research Team

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Algeria's Chinese solar-panel imports just fell 46%. The data shows the bottleneck is tendering capacity, not money or sunlight — a warning Sudan needs before its 2033 solar target comes due.

3Bi Research Team

The Hook

Algeria imported 2.1 gigawatts of Chinese solar panels in 2025 — a sixfold jump from the year before, and by any measure a boom (Energy Research Unit/attaqa.net, 8 August 2026, citing Ember data). Six months into 2026, that boom has gone into reverse. Algeria's Chinese solar-panel imports fell 46% year-on-year in the first half of 2026, to 460 megawatts from 850 MW, with the second quarter down 60% (Energy Research Unit/attaqa.net, 8 August 2026). The country still says it wants 15,000 MW of renewable capacity by 2035. The International Energy Agency, reading the same tender pipeline Algeria's own officials are working from, expects solar to reach just 2% of Algeria's electricity mix by 2030 — up from 1% in 2025 (IEA, cited in Energy Research Unit/attaqa.net, 8 August 2026). That is not a rounding error. That is the IEA telling Algeria, politely, that its own target isn't going to happen on schedule.

We're not writing about Algeria because Algeria is the story. We're writing about it because Sudan is about to make the identical bet — a solar target set on paper, years out, that depends entirely on state capacity Sudan does not yet have — and Algeria just showed, in real time, what happens when that bet comes due.

The Argument

First, look at what actually broke. Algeria isn't short on money, sunlight, or panels. It closed 2025 with a record import quarter, then watched imports crater the following two quarters — January's collapse alone cost 270 MW of capacity relative to 2025, the steepest single-month drop of the year (Energy Research Unit/attaqa.net, 8 August 2026). Algeria ended 2025 with just 619 MW of installed renewable capacity actually on the grid, a small fraction of what those 2.1 GW of imported panels should eventually deliver (Energy Research Unit/attaqa.net, 8 August 2026, IRENA data). The IEA attributes the gap to slow tendering procedures and execution delays, not financing or supply (Energy Research Unit/attaqa.net, 8 August 2026). Panels sitting in a warehouse are not megawatts on a grid. The conversion step — tender, permit, interconnect, commission — is where Algeria's target is actually failing, and that step is a government-capacity problem, not a resource problem.

Second, Sudan's target rests on a thinner institutional base than Algeria's, not a thicker one. Sudan's pre-war plan called for 3,300 MW of renewable capacity by 2033, including 2,190 MW of



solar (UNDP, cited in North Africa Post and Radio Dabanga, May 2026). Sudan's installed solar capacity today is roughly 190 MW — and unlike Algeria's utility-scale procurement pipeline, most of that is informal and household-financed: rooftop systems bought by families and clinics fleeing a collapsed grid, not panels connected through a national tendering process (UNDP, cited in North Africa Post, May 2026). Sudan's electricity sector has absorbed an estimated \$3 billion in war damage since April 2023, and roughly 15,000 transformers have been destroyed (UNDP study via Radio Dabanga, 25 May 2026; Power Gen Advancement, 22 June 2026, citing Sudan's Industry Ministry). Algeria — with a functioning state, oil revenue, and an existing tendering apparatus — still cannot convert import volume into installed capacity fast enough to hit its own number. Sudan is planning to hit a comparable number with a war-damaged grid and no functioning national tender process at all.

Third, this is fixable, but not by waiting. The instinct in a fragile state is to defer institution-building until the war ends and treat renewable-energy procurement as a peacetime problem. Algeria's stall argues the opposite: tendering capacity, grid-interconnection standards, and permitting throughput take years to build even under stable, well-financed conditions. If Sudan waits for a ceasefire to start building the administrative machinery a 2,190 MW solar target requires, it will spend its first years of peace exactly where Algeria is now — sitting on imported panels, foreign financing interest, and a target it cannot execute against, because nobody built the tendering pipeline while the underlying problem was being solved.

Why It Matters to the Reader

If you advise Sudan's energy planners, a donor, or an AfDB or GCF program officer weighing a Sudan renewable-energy commitment, Algeria's 46% import collapse is the clearest evidence available right now that capital and panels are not the binding constraint on solar deployment in this region — administrative execution is. That changes what a useful intervention looks like. A grant or loan earmarked purely for panel procurement will produce Algeria's outcome: warehoused capacity, not grid capacity. A technical-assistance program that builds Sudan's Ministry of Energy and Mining's tendering, interconnection-standards, and permitting capacity now — while the political transition is still unresolved — is the more urgent and more fundable ask, because it addresses the actual bottleneck Algeria's data just made visible.

Close

Sudan cannot control when its war ends. It can control whether the country that eventually signs a ceasefire also knows how to run a solar tender. Algeria had money, sunlight, and six times as many panels as the year before, and its target still slipped. Sudan is heading toward 2033 with none of Algeria's advantages and the same missing piece. The fix isn't more panels arriving faster. It's building the institution that turns panels into power — starting now, not after the peace



deal.

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