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Algeria Broke Its Own Electricity Record Three Days Running



The 8,000-Megawatt Cushion Sudan Doesn't Have

3Bi

Algeria Broke Its Own Electricity Record Three Days Running This Week. The 8,000-Megawatt Cushion That Absorbed It Doesn't Exist in Sudan.

Algeria's grid set a new demand record three days straight this week, backed by an 8,000-megawatt surplus. Sudan's war-damaged grid has no equivalent cushion.





Contents

Headline Fact	1
Timeline	1
What We Know / What We Don't	1
Do-No-Harm Note	2
What to Watch	2
Sourcing & Next Update	3



Algeria's grid broke its own electricity-demand record three days running this week, absorbing the heatwave spike with an 8,000-megawatt surplus. Sudan's war-damaged grid has no equivalent cushion to draw on.

Headline Fact

Algeria's national grid set a new all-time electricity demand record for the third consecutive day this week — 21,828 megawatts (MW) at 2:30pm local time on Wednesday, 19 August 2026 — as a heatwave pushed air-conditioning load across the country's coastal provinces to levels the system had never seen. The grid held. State utility Sonelgaz reports no major outages. We think the reason it held, and what would happen if the same demand spike hit a grid like Sudan's instead, is the more useful story than the record itself.

Timeline

12 July 2026 — Algeria's electricity demand hits 21,176 MW at 3:00pm, the country's first record of the summer, surpassing 2025's full-year peak of 20,628 MW (attaqa.net Energy Research Unit, 20 August 2026, citing official Ministry of Energy and Sonelgaz data).

13 July 2026 — Demand climbs again to 21,378 MW at 3:30pm, 202 MW above the previous day (attaqa.net, 20 August 2026).

17 August 2026 — A fresh summer heatwave, this time accompanied by unusually high humidity in coastal areas, pushes demand to a new high of 21,650 MW at 2:21pm (attaqa.net, 20 August 2026).

18 August 2026 — Demand rises again to 21,727 MW at 2:30pm, 77 MW above the prior day (attaqa.net, 20 August 2026).

19 August 2026 — Demand peaks at 21,828 MW at 2:30pm — 101 MW above the day before, roughly 1,200 MW (5.8%) above 2025's full-year record, and about 652 MW above July's first record this year (attaqa.net, 20 August 2026). Anadolu Agency (20 August 2026, citing Sonelgaz) independently confirms the record and reports Algeria's total generation capacity at roughly 29,000 MW/day — a surplus of more than 8,000 MW above the new peak, including close to 1,000 MW from renewables, mainly solar.

What We Know / What We Don't

We know the demand records are real, officially reported, and consistent across two



independent sources (attaqa.net's Energy Research Unit and Anadolu Agency). We know Algeria's generation mix is almost entirely gas: natural gas supplied 98.6% of electricity generated in 2024 and 98.7% in 2023, against roughly 1% for solar and under 0.4% combined for oil, wind, and hydro (attaqa.net Energy Research Unit database, cited 20 August 2026). We know the Energy Ministry attributes the load spike specifically to air-conditioning demand concentrated between 1pm and 4pm, and that Sonelgaz says its transmission, distribution, and generation teams have held the system stable through all five records this summer.

What we don't know: attaqa.net's generation-mix figure (share of energy actually generated) and Anadolu's capacity figure (installed capacity and headroom) measure different things and aren't directly comparable — we're not able to independently reconcile them to a single up-to-date figure for how much spare, dispatchable capacity Algeria actually has left if temperatures climb further or a plant trips offline mid-heatwave. We also don't have real-time confirmation of conditions past 19 August; if the heatwave continues, a sixth record this summer is plausible but not yet confirmed.

Do-No-Harm Note

This report names no individuals and describes no specific households, only national-level utility data released by Algeria's Ministry of Energy and Sonelgaz. We considered and rejected drawing a direct numerical comparison between Algeria's surplus capacity and Sudan's damaged grid (below) as a simple ratio — the two systems differ too much in starting conditions, war status, and data reliability for that comparison to be meaningful rather than misleading, so we describe the contrast qualitatively instead.

What to Watch

Algeria's five heat-driven demand records this summer are, by the numbers, a success story: a gas-heavy grid absorbing unprecedented air-conditioning load without blackouts, backed by real spare capacity. That is precisely the buffer Sudan's grid does not have. Up to \$3 billion in war damage since April 2023 — including strikes on the Merowe Dam and the El-Obeid thermal plant — has removed an estimated 40% of Sudan's pre-war generation capacity (UNDP Sudan, May 2026). A grid running at 60% of its former capacity has no 8,000-MW cushion to absorb a surprise heatwave; every additional degree of regional warming is a demand shock landing on a system with essentially no headroom to spare. Algeria's experience this week is a working illustration — not a template, given how differently the two grids are built and fueled — of what margin looks like when a grid has it, and a reminder of what Sudan's donors and reconstruction planners are working without as they size new solar and storage capacity.

Concretely, we'll be watching: whether Algeria's heatwave persists into late August and produces



a sixth consecutive record; whether Sonelgaz publishes an updated capacity/surplus figure that reconciles the generation-mix and installed-capacity numbers cited above; and whether Sudan's own reconstruction planners factor peak-demand headroom — not just total capacity restored — into new solar and mini-grid design, a gap 3Bi has flagged in prior coverage of Sudan's battery-storage financing needs.

Sourcing & Next Update

Primary source: attaqat.net Energy Research Unit, "الجزيرة الكهربائية: أسبوع من القمم التاريخية، بالتفصيل والأرقام" ("Algeria's Electricity: A Week of Historic Peaks, in Detail and Numbers"), 20 August 2026, citing Algeria's Ministry of Energy and Renewable Energies and Sonelgaz. Cross-checked against Anadolu Agency, "Algeria records highest-ever power demand amid scorching heat wave," 20 August 2026, citing Sonelgaz. Sudan grid-damage figures from UNDP Sudan's Solar Energy Value Chain Study and 26 May 2026 press release, previously verified in 3Bi's prior coverage. 3Bi will note any sixth consecutive record or Sonelgaz capacity update in a future report if the heatwave continues.

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