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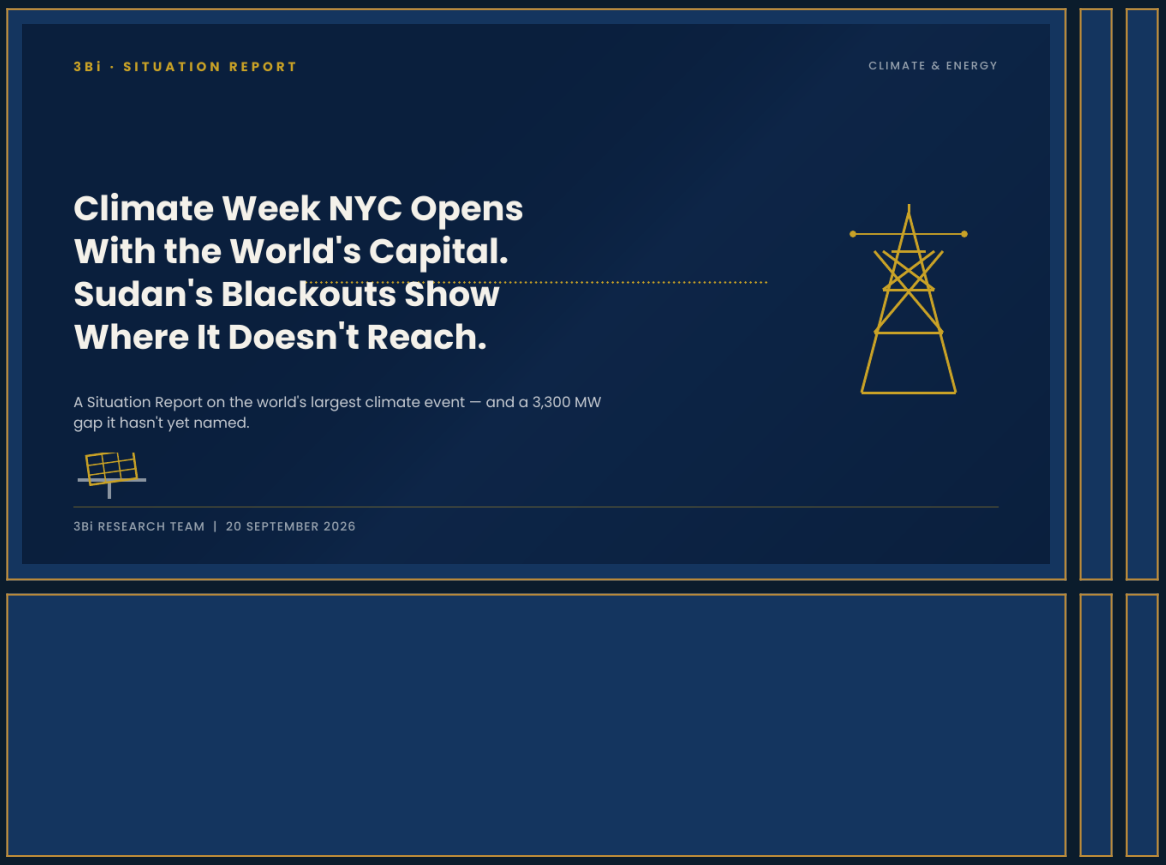

Situation Report: Climate Week NYC Opens With the World's Capital. Sudan's Blackouts Show Where It Doesn't Reach.

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Contents

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

Climate Week NYC 2026 opens today with finance as a core track. Sudan's grid, meanwhile, runs a 3,300 MW shortfall — and a $5,000 solar system most households can't afford.

Headline Fact

Climate Week NYC 2026 — the world's largest climate event, convening more than 100,000 people across 1,000+ events — opened today, 20 September, in New York, running alongside the UN General Assembly through 27 September (Climate Week NYC, climateweeknyc.org, accessed 20 Sept 2026). Its stated 2026 focus is "energy, impact and action," with finance and clean growth as one of its core tracks. On the same day, Sudan's electricity authority is managing a national shortfall of roughly 3,300 megawatts, with at least 30% of the population lacking grid access entirely and outages running up to 16 hours a day in many areas (Actum Sudan/Khartoum electricity authority technical report, reviewed 15 Sept 2026; Washington Times/AP, 6 Sept 2026, via Arab News).

Timeline

- **June 2026 (approx.):** Sudan's national grid capacity has fallen to roughly 1,100 MW, down from about 4,400 MW before the war, after drone strikes on power plants and the departure of nearly half the country's electricity engineers and technicians since 2023; the UN Development Programme has estimated $3 billion in grid damage (Al Jazeera, 16 April 2026; TimesLIVE, 28 August 2026).
- **Late March 2026:** A technical fault triggers a total blackout of Sudan's national grid; utility engineers report only a phased restoration (Actum Sudan, 15 Sept 2026).
- **6 September 2026:** The Associated Press (via Washington Times/Arab News) reports that a typical 10-kilowatt rooftop solar system — the main alternative households are turning to — costs close to $5,000, putting it out of reach for most Sudanese families as the local currency depreciates.
- **15 September 2026:** A Khartoum electricity authority technical report, reviewed by Actum Sudan, puts the current production shortfall at roughly 3,300 MW, describing it as "unprecedented," and attributes it largely to the near-total shutdown of thermal plants that depend on imported fuel — fuel whose price has risen further amid regional market disruption tied to the Iran conflict.
- **20 September 2026 (today):** Climate Week NYC opens in New York, timed alongside UNGA High-Level Week; its Opening Ceremony follows on 21 September, with "The Hub Live" plenary sessions on finance, energy and electrification running 21–22 September (Climate Week NYC, climateweeknyc.org).

What We Know / What We Don't

We know Sudan's grid crisis is now driven primarily by fuel access, not just war damage: with thermal generation largely offline, hydropower from the Merowe and Roseires dams has become the dominant — and seasonally unreliable — source of supply (Actum Sudan, 15 Sept 2026). We know Khartoum State has formed a specialised committee whose stated strategy centers on accelerating solar and other renewables (Actum Sudan, 15 Sept 2026), and that global off-grid renewable capacity reached about 11.1 gigawatts by end-2024, nearly double the level a decade earlier (IRENA, cited in Actum Sudan, 15 Sept 2026) — evidence that decentralized solar is scaling elsewhere even as cost remains the binding constraint inside Sudan.

We do not yet know whether any Climate Week NYC session, pledge, or finance-track announcement this week will name Sudan, or fragile and conflict-affected states more broadly, as a target for concessional or blended finance. Climate Week NYC's published event themes span finance, energy and climate justice, but as of this writing no session agenda or sponsor announcement reviewed for this report specifically addresses financing access for conflict-affected grids. We also do not have a verified, current market price for the smaller solar kits (sub-1kW) that lower-income Sudanese households would need instead of the $5,000 systems cited in reporting — a gap worth flagging rather than filling with assumption.

Do-No-Harm Note

We checked whether this report could identify or endanger any named individual or community. Reporting we drew on names one Sudanese solar user by first name and general location (a "housewife" in an unspecified urban area); we have not repeated identifying detail here beyond what is already published, and we have not named any specific neighborhood, facility, or technician. No new identifying information is introduced in this report.

What to Watch

Climate Week NYC's finance-track sessions (21–22 September) and any World Bank, IRENA, or Climate Group announcements tied to sub-Saharan or conflict-affected energy access; whether Sudan's Khartoum solar committee publishes a costed plan or a subsidy mechanism for household-scale systems; and whether fuel-price pressure tied to the Iran conflict continues to push more of Sudan's remaining thermal capacity offline before winter demand rises.

Sourcing & Next Update

Sources: Climate Week NYC official site (climateweeknyc.org, accessed 20 Sept 2026); Actum Sudan/Khartoum electricity authority technical report (published 15 Sept 2026); Associated Press via Washington Times and Arab News (6 Sept 2026); Al Jazeera (16 April 2026); TimesLIVE (28 August 2026); IRENA off-grid renewables data as cited in Actum Sudan (15 Sept 2026). 3Bi will issue a follow-up if a Climate Week NYC session or announcement this week specifically addresses financing for conflict-affected or fragile-state grids.

This piece was produced through 3Bi's automated daily publications workflow monitoring regional and international climate reporting.

This publication is produced with support from 3Bi's institutional donors; see the full funder list at 3bisudan.org.