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Recurrent Collapse of Nigeria's National Power Grid: Governance Challenges, Socio-Economic Consequences, And Legislative Pathways for Reform

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Executive Summary

An unstable electricity supply remains one of the major challenges Nigeria has yet to overcome since its independence on October 1, 1960. Furthermore, Nigeria's national power grid has collapsed either partially or completely over 564 times between 2000 and 2022, with multiple failures continuing into 2024¹ and still ongoing to date. These recurrent outages stem from outdated infrastructure, regulatory inefficiencies, financial instability, and inadequate security of power assets. The socio-economic consequences are severe, ranging from industrial downtime and healthcare risks to educational disruption and environmental degradation.²

The Electricity Act of 2025 establishes a legislative framework for reform, including the decentralisation of power generation, enhanced regulatory oversight, and the promotion of renewable energy integration.³ Effective implementation, however, requires political will, financial transparency, and harmonization of federal and state laws. Without decisive action, Nigeria risks perpetuating grid instability that constrains economic growth and deepens inequality. With reform, the country can unlock new opportunities for industrialization, sustainability, and inclusive development. This Issue Brief therefore recommends that the National Assembly through the joint efforts of Senate and House Committees on Power and Renewable energy may wish to:

1. **enforce** its appropriation and oversight powers as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on all the Ministries, Department, and Agencies (MDAs) that have to do with power supply in the country to embark on grid modernization by investing in smart grid technologies and upgrade transmission infrastructure throughout Nigeria like: Morocco, South Africa, and Egypt.
2. **ensure**, through oversight, a full implementation of the Electricity Act 2025, which amended the 2023 Electricity Act to close perceived gaps, strengthen enforcement, clarify jurisdictional boundaries, and harmonise all the federal and state laws that have similarities to avoid regulatory overlap for legal clarity.
3. **organize**, through the joint efforts of Senate and House Committees on Police Affairs, Interior, National Security and Intelligence, and Information, National Orientation, Ethics and Values, a public hearing with the relevant stakeholders in the power and security sectors to enhance protection of power assets against vandalism and theft of electricity infrastructure in Nigeria.
4. **encourage** the executive arm of government at the federal and state levels to provide tax incentives and subsidies for renewable energy projects and investors in Nigeria for the expansion of renewable energy in Nigeria.
5. **encourage** the Federal Ministry of Power to expand solar, wind, and hydro projects to diversify supply and reduce reliance on the fragile grid for Renewable Energy Integration.

¹ Mojisola A. Jimoh and Bello S. Raji. (2023, March 22). Electric Grid Reliability: An Assessment of the Nigerian Power System Failures, Causes and Mitigations. Covenant Journal Of Engineering Technology (Cjet), Vol. 7, No.1, June 2023; pp17-20 <https://journals.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/index.php/cjet/article/view/3308/1518> retrieved on 22nd February, 2026.

² Afolabi, V. (2026, February 18). Nigeria's Electricity Grid Collapse Crisis Needs More Than A \$2.6 Billion Bailout. Energy in Nigeria. <https://energyinafrica.com/insights/nigerias-electricity-grid-collapse-crisis-needs-more-than-a-2-6-billion-bailout/> retrieved on 24th February, 2026

³ Agu, O., Boluwajoko, A., Olajide, D., Alayo, E. (2026, January 22). From Reform to Refinement: Understanding the key provisions of the new electricity bill 2025 and its impact on Nigeria's power governance. *Business Day*. https://businessday.ng/news/legal-business/article/from-reform-to-refinement-understanding-the-key-provisions-of-the-new-electricity-bill-2025-and-its-impact-on-nigerias-power-governance/#google_vignette retrieved on 23rd February, 2026.



Background

Nigeria's electricity sector is characterized by chronic instability, with frequent grid collapses undermining economic productivity and public confidence. Despite being Africa's largest economy, Nigeria's power infrastructure remains fragile, unable to meet the demands of its population and industries. The persistence of these failures highlights systemic governance weaknesses and the urgent need for legislative intervention. For example, in a single day on September 10th, 2025, the megawatt generated suddenly dropped from 2,917mw to 1.5 mw between 11 am and 12 pm same day. It was also reported that 11 distribution companies, including Abuja Electricity Distribution Companies (AEDC), were affected by the collapse.⁴

Issues

There are so many issues affecting the recurrent failures of Nigeria's national power grid. In terms of governance challenges, transmission lines and substations are outdated and poorly maintained, which causes poor electricity infrastructure in Nigeria.⁵ In addition, overlapping mandates between federal and state agencies create inefficiencies which often lead to regulatory ambiguity.⁶ In the

same vein, there is a problem of financial constraint, which happens when Distribution Companies (DisCos) fail to generate enough revenue and struggle to recover costs; therefore, they cannot fully pay the Nigerian Bulk Electricity Trading Company (NBET). NBET then struggles to pay Generating Companies (GenCos), and the debt cycle continues.⁷ Also, another persisting menace is the issue of vandalism and sabotage through tireless attacks on power infrastructures in Nigeria by hoodlums, which also exacerbate power instability.⁸ Policy inconsistency federal government is also contributing to the irregular power supply in Nigeria, as frequent changes in energy policy hinder long-term planning and investment.⁹

In the areas of socio-economic consequences of the recurrent collapse of Nigeria's National Power Grid, it is worth noting that there are several economic losses being recorded in Nigeria daily as a result of the epileptic power supply. Manufacturing and service industries face production halts and increasing operational

⁴ Bada, Y. (2025, September 10). Breaking: Nigeria Grid Collapses, breakdown of 11 Affected Distribution Companies Emerge. *Legit*. <https://www.legit.ng/nigeria/1673457-breaking-national-grid-collapses-affected-states-areas/> retrieved on 1st March, 2026

⁵ Nwafor, C.U., and Onu C. (2022, August 19). Electrical Energy Reform and Its Impact on Power System Collapse in Nigeria. *International Journal of Frontiers in Engineering and Technology Research*, 2022, 03(01), 001–009. <https://frontiersrj.com/journals/ijfetr/sites/default/files/IJFETR-2022-0045.pdf> retrieved on 24th February, 2026

⁶ Agu, O., Boluwajoko, A., Olajide, D., Alayo, E. (2026, January 22). From Reform to Refinement: Understanding the key provisions of the new electricity bill 2025 and its impact on Nigeria's power governance. *Business Day*. https://businessday.ng/news/legal-business/article/from-reform-to-refinement-understanding-the-key-provisions-of-the-new-electricity-bill-2025-and-its-impact-on-nigerias-power-governance/#google_vignette retrieved on 23rd February, 2026.

⁷ Afolabi, V. (2026, February 18). Nigeria's Electricity Grid Collapse Crisis Needs More Than A \$2.6 Billion Bailout. *Energy in Africa*. <https://energyinafrica.com/insights/nigerias-electricity-grid-collapse-crisis-needs-more-than-a-2-6-billion-bailout/> retrieved on 24th February, 2026.

⁸ Adigun, O. (2026, January 29). Insiders Explain Why National Grid Keeps Collapsing. *Nairametrics*. https://nairametrics.com/2026/01/29/insiders-explain-why-national-grid-keeps-collapsing/#google_vignette retrieved on 23rd February, 2026

⁹ Omedo, G. (2026) Why Nigeria's Energy Reform Matter: Six Lessons for Nigeria's Emerging State Energy Markets. *UNDP*. <https://www.undp.org/nigeria/blog/why-nigerias-energy-reforms-matter-six-lessons-nigerias-emerging-state-energy-markets> retrieved on 23rd February, 2026.

costs.¹⁰ The menace also increases the health risk and loss of lives in Nigeria because the Hospitals experience power outages that jeopardise patient care, especially during surgeries or patient care.¹¹ Educationally, schools, including universities, struggle with unreliable electricity, affecting digital learning.¹² The epilepsies power supply also contributes to social inequality in Nigeria; for instance, wealthier households and businesses can afford alternative power generation like solar systems, generators, etc., while poorer communities remain in darkness, especially in rural communities.¹³ However, there are environmental costs to the usage of generators, especially in a populated area, because widespread reliance on diesel or petrol generators increases carbon emissions and air pollution into the environment and affects human health.¹⁴

Areas for Legislative Intervention:

- 1.) The National Assembly through the joint efforts of Senate and House Committees on Power and Renewable energy should effectively enforce its appropriation and oversight powers as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on all the Ministries, Department, and Agencies (MDAs) that have to do with power supply in the country to embark on grid modernization by

investing in smart grid technologies and upgrade transmission infrastructure throughout Nigeria like: Morocco, South Africa, and Egypt.

- 2.) The National Assembly may also ensure, through oversight, a full implementation of the Electricity Act 2025, which amended the 2023 Electricity Act to close perceived gaps, strengthen enforcement, clarify jurisdictional boundaries, and harmonise all the federal and state laws that have similarities to avoid regulatory overlap for legal clarity.
- 3.) The National Assembly may also, through the joint efforts of Senate and House Committees on Police Affairs, Army; Interior, National Security and Intelligence, and Information, National Orientation, Ethics and Values organize a public hearing with the relevant stakeholders in the power and security sectors to enhance protection of power assets against vandalism and theft of electricity infrastructure in Nigeria.
- 4.) The leadership of the National Assembly may also encourage the executive arm of government at the federal and state levels to provide tax incentives and subsidies for renewable energy projects and

¹⁰ Afolabi, V. (2026, February 18). Nigeria's Electricity Grid Collapse Crisis Needs More Than A \$2.6 Billion Bailout. Energy in Nigeria. <https://energyinafrica.com/insights/nigerias-electricity-grid-collapse-crisis-needs-more-than-a-2-6-billion-bailout/> retrieved on 24th February, 2026.

¹¹ Adigun, O. (2026, January 29). Insiders Explain Why National Grid Keeps Collapsing. *Nairametrics*. https://nairametrics.com/2026/01/29/insiders-explain-why-national-grid-keeps-collapsing/#google_vignette retrieved on 23rd February, 2026.

¹² Omedo, G. (2026) Why Nigeria's Energy Reform Matter: Six Lessons for Nigeria's Emerging State Energy Markets. UNDP. <https://www.undp.org/nigeria/blog/why-nigerias-energy-reforms-matter-six-lessons-nigerias-emerging-state-energy-markets> retrieved on 23rd February, 2026.

[energy-reforms-matter-six-lessons-nigerias-emerging-state-energy-markets](https://www.undp.org/nigeria/blog/why-nigerias-energy-reforms-matter-six-lessons-nigerias-emerging-state-energy-markets) retrieved on 23rd February, 2026.

¹³ Adigun, O. (2026, January 29). Insiders Explain Why National Grid Keeps Collapsing. *Nairametrics*. https://nairametrics.com/2026/01/29/insiders-explain-why-national-grid-keeps-collapsing/#google_vignette retrieved on 23rd February, 2026.

¹⁴ Omedo, G. (2026) Why Nigeria's Energy Reform Matter: Six Lessons for Nigeria's Emerging State Energy Markets. UNDP. <https://www.undp.org/nigeria/blog/why-nigerias-energy-reforms-matter-six-lessons-nigerias-emerging-state-energy-markets> retrieved on 23rd February, 2026.



investors in Nigeria for the expansion of renewable energy in Nigeria.

- 5.) The National Assembly should encourage the Federal Ministry of Power to expand solar, wind, and hydro projects to diversify supply and reduce reliance on the fragile grid for Renewable Energy Integration.

From the above discussion, it is not out of place to say that Nigeria's recurrent national power grid collapse is symptomatic of deeper governance and structural challenges. However, legislative reforms, if effectively implemented, can transform the sector into a more resilient, sustainable, and inclusive system. Nevertheless, reliable electricity is not just an economic necessity but a cornerstone of social development and national security.

Conclusion:

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