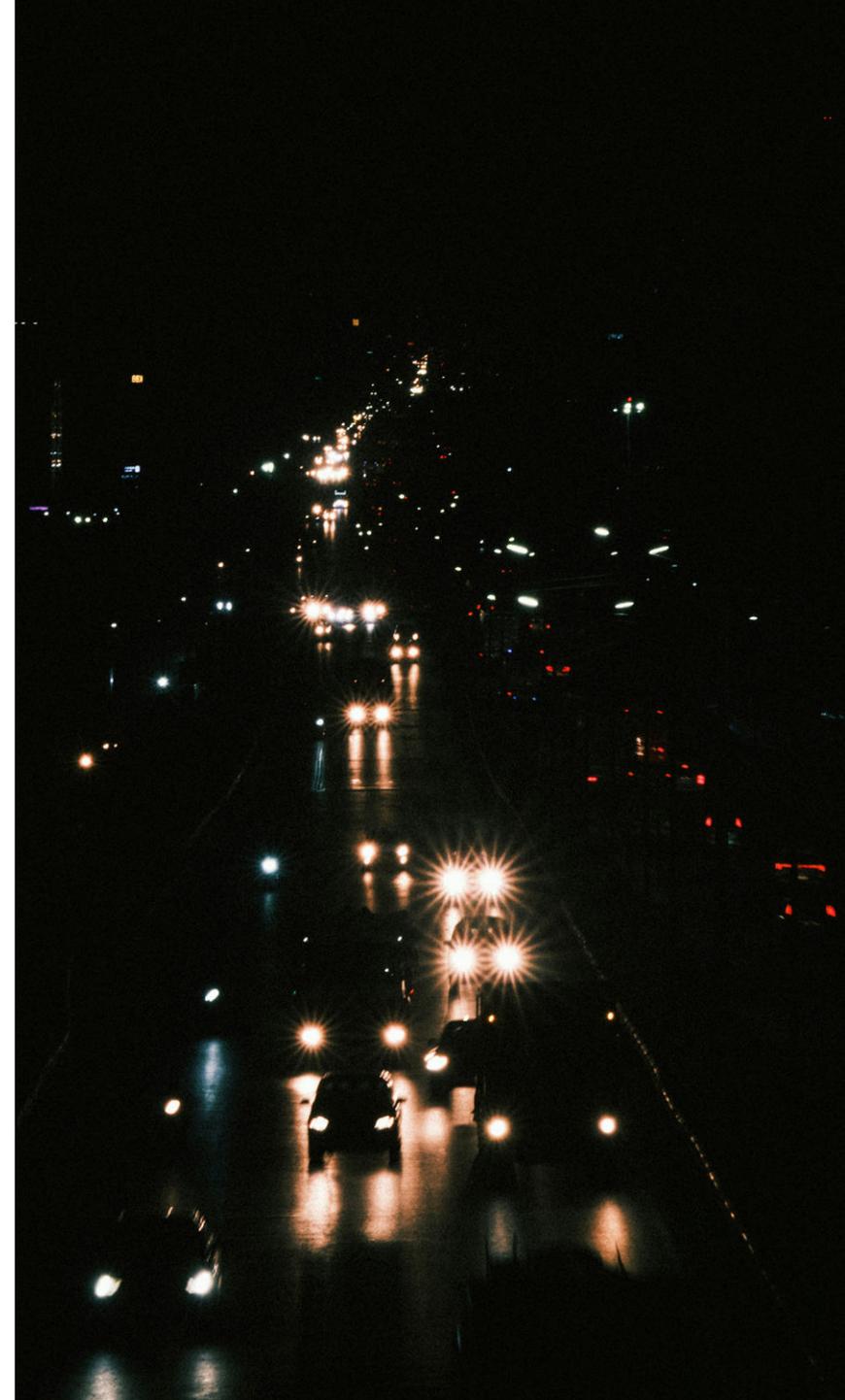🇪🇸 Spain   🇵🇹 Portulgal

Nationwide power blackouts and associated disruptions

Risk Level ● ● ○ ○ ○ Moderate

Anticipate possible residual disruptions to travel across Spain and Portugal in the aftermath of a widespread power outage across the **Iberian Peninsula** in the near-term.

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The incident disrupted air, road and rail transport, halted critical services, and affected millions of residents.

Situation: On 28 April, at approximately 12:30 local time, a significant power outage affected the entire **Iberian Peninsula**, impacting Spain and Portugal. The incident disrupted air, road and rail transport, halted critical services, and affected millions of residents. Spanish nuclear power plants were safely shut down as a precautionary measure. The outage also briefly impacted the **Basque** region and parts of **Occitania** in France, where power was quickly restored.

By 29 April, Red Eléctrica (REE) had restored 99.16 percent of Spain's power, and Redes Energéticas Nacionais (REN) confirmed Portugal's grid had been fully stabilised, with all 89 substations back online. France's RTE provided 950 MW to support Spain's recovery, and Morocco assisted despite minor internet disruptions. The cause remains under investigation, with cyberattacks ruled out by REE and Portugal's authorities. Spain's High Court is probing potential terrorism, while REE identified two solar plant failures in southwest Spain as possible triggers.

As of 30 April, both countries' grids are fully normalised, and states of emergency have been lifted. No significant disruptions persist, but the outage's scale—described as Europe's worst in decades—prompts ongoing reviews to prevent recurrence.

What to Expect: As of 30 April, the Iberian Peninsula's infrastructure is fully restored, and no disruptions to travel, services or communications are anticipated. All transport networks, including high-speed rail, metro systems, airports and road infrastructure, are operating at pre-outage levels. Critical services such as healthcare, water supply, and banking systems are stable, ensuring uninterrupted access for residents and visitors. Telecommunications networks are functioning reliably, with no restrictions on mobile or internet usage. While the investigation into the cause of the outage's continues, it poses no immediate impact on daily operations.

Impact on Travel: The power outage on 28 April caused widespread disruptions to air, rail and overland travel across Spain and Portugal, but by 30 April, all transport systems have fully recovered. Below is a summary of the impacts and current status:

On 28 April, high-speed AVE trains and regional services stopped, stranding approximately 35,000 passengers.

Rail:

- **Spain:** On 28 April, high-speed AVE trains and regional services stopped, stranding approximately 35,000 passengers. **Madrid** and **Barcelona** metro systems shut down, requiring manual evacuations from tunnels. By 29 April, most services resumed, with **Madrid** Metro's Line 7A as the last to restart. As of 30 April all rail services, including high-speed, regional and metro lines, are operating normally with no delays reported.

- **Portugal:** Rail services, already limited by a concurrent strike, were further disrupted as **Lisbon** and **Porto** metros failed on 28 April. Regional trains connecting smaller cities stopped entirely. By 29 April, metro services resumed, and regional lines gradually restarted. As of 30 April, all rail and metro services are fully operational.

Air Travel:

- **Spain:** On 28 April, major airports like **Madrid-Barajas (MAD/LEMD)**, **Barcelona-El Prat (BCN/LEBL)**, **Malaga (AGP/LEMG)** and **Palma de Mallorca (PMI/LEPA)** faced significant disruptions, with over 400 flights canceled or delayed. Backup generators allowed limited operations, but long queues formed for rebooking. By 29 April, normal schedules resumed with minor delays. As of 30 April, all airports reported no disruptions.

- **Portugal: Lisbon (LIS/LPPT)**, **Porto (OPO/LPPR)** and **Faro (FAO/LPFR)** airports saw widespread cancellations and delays on 28 April, with **Lisbon** resuming limited operations by 22:00. By 29 April, air travel normalised. As of 30 April, all flights were operating on schedule.

Overland Travel:

- **Spain:** Traffic light failures on 28 April caused severe congestion in cities like **Madrid** and **Barcelona**, with **Madrid's M30 tunnel** temporarily closed. Public buses and intercity coaches were disrupted. By 29 April, traffic systems and roads returned to normal. As of 30 April, all road networks and public transport were fully functional.

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Payment systems
and ATMs were
disrupted,
impacting retail
and services, while
hospitals operated
on generators.

- **Portugal:** Outages disrupted traffic lights and caused gridlock in **Lisbon** and **Porto** on 28 April. The **Vasco da Gama Bridge** was briefly affected but reopened by evening. By 29 April, congestion cleared and traffic systems stabilised. As of 30 April, no issues remained, and overland travel was uninterrupted.

Telecommunications and Services: The power outage on 28 April severely impacted telecommunications and critical services in Spain and Portugal, but by April 30, all systems are fully restored. Below is a summary of the impacts and current status:

- **Spain:** On 28 April, mobile and internet services collapsed, with Vodafone reporting operations at 70 percent capacity and widespread issues in call connectivity and messaging. ATMs and card payment systems failed, forcing cash-only transactions and causing long queues at supermarkets. Hospitals relied on backup generators, and schools and businesses in regions like **Madrid** and **Catalonia** closed preemptively. By 29 April, telecommunications stabilized, with 95 percent of services restored, and critical systems like banking and healthcare resumed normal operations. As of 30 April, all mobile, internet, and payment systems are fully functional, and no restrictions or disruptions remained.

- **Portugal:** On 28 April, Meo reported significant outages in mobile and internet services, particularly in areas without power. Payment systems and ATMs were disrupted, impacting retail and services, while hospitals operated on generators. By 29 April, Meo confirmed full service restoration in powered areas, and banking and healthcare systems normalised. As of 30 April, telecommunications, payment systems and all critical services were operating without issues.

European Union is pushing for a detailed report to strengthen regional grid stability.

Advice: To prepare for future blackouts, consider to:

- Build an emergency kit (food, water, flashlight, first-aid)
- Get backup power (power bank, generator, solar charger)
- Plan communication (battery radio, family contact plan)
- Stock non-perishable food, insulate home, and secure medications
- Coordinate with neighbours and monitor local updates
- Have alternative heat/cooling and keep cash handy

Ongoing Investigation and Response: Spain and Portugal declared states of emergency on 29 April, lifted by 29 April. Spain deployed 30,000 police to maintain order, while emergency cabinet meetings coordinated recovery. Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez urged calm and dismissed renewable energy as the cause, countering misinformation. The rapid restoration – within 24 hours for most areas – reflects effective coordination, supported by France's RTE (950 MW supply) and Morocco's grid assistance. Investigations continue and the European Union is pushing for a detailed report to strengthen regional grid stability.