

# Greece races to restore power grid as cold snap recedes

February 17 2021

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Snow and wind felled some 900 trees in the greater Athens area

Crews in Greece on Wednesday raced to restore power to tens of thousands of homes as a severe cold front receded after bringing heavy snowfall and gale-force winds that left three dead.

Some 40,000 homes and businesses mainly in the northern Athens suburbs were still without electricity, the state power distribution network operator said in a statement.

Around half of the electricity grid has been restored in the affected suburbs, it said.

Snow had earlier blanketed ancient monuments like the Acropolis and the cold front, dubbed "Medea" after the mythical Greek sorceress of the Argonauts, sent temperatures plunging.

The maximum low of minus 24.8 Celsius (minus 12.6 Fahrenheit) was recorded near the northwestern city of Florina early Wednesday.

Snow and wind on Tuesday felled some 900 trees in the greater Athens area alone, regional governor George Patoulis said. An estimated 250,000 homes and businesses had earlier faced power outages, Patoulis told state TV ERT earlier Wednesday.

Army units were assisting the fire department in removing the debris, officials said.

The snowfall, which hit Athens on Monday, was the worst seen in the capital since 2008 according to meteorologists.

Greece's main highway, linking Athens and Thessaloniki, reopened Wednesday after the snowfall subsided.

On Tuesday, two elderly men suffering from respiratory problems died on the island of Evia near Athens after their breathing apparatus failed during a power outage.

And a livestock farmer in his 60s on the island of Crete was found dead

in the snow outside his granary.

Three other missing Cretan livestock farmers were able to reach shelter on Wednesday, state agency ANA said.

The weather conditions forced officials to cancel coronavirus vaccinations in Athens on Tuesday.

The government came under fire after a snowplow was dispatched to the chic Athens quarter of Kolonaki, where many embassies and ministers' personal offices are located, on Tuesday while heavy machinery was lacking elsewhere.

There was further criticism after a journalist on Tuesday posted a picture on her Twitter account of herself and another journalist with Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis outside a popular Kolonaki cafe.

The snowplow operator told Skai TV he had also cleared the way to two major hospitals in the area.

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Citation: Greece races to restore power grid as cold snap recedes (2021, February 17) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2021-02-greece-power-grid-cold-snap.html>

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