

JOINT STATEMENT BY MINISTRIES OF WATER AND SANITATION, ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY, GAUTENG PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT, RAND WATER, ESKOM, THE CITY OF JOHANNESBURG AND EMFULENI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY TO UPDATE ON MEASURES TO MITIGATE WATER SUPPLY DISRUPTIONS IN GAUTENG RESULTING FROM POWER OUTAGES

15 September 2026

For immediate Release

The Ministry of Water and Sanitation, led by Minister Pemmy Majodina and Deputy Minister David Mahlobo convened an urgent meeting last night, Monday 14 September 2026, with Rand Water, the Gauteng Provincial Government, Emfuleni Local Municipality (LM), the City of Johannesburg and its entities, City Power and Johannesburg Water, as well as representatives of ESKOM. The purpose of the meeting was to get an update following the similar meeting that was held on 8 September 2026, with the aim of identifying solutions to the electricity supply disruptions that have been affecting Rand Water's water supply systems, resulting in intermittent water supply disruptions.

There have been increasing electricity supply disruptions that have affected Rand Water's water supply systems. Two of Rand Water's water supply systems have been affected, namely the Vereeniging Water Treatment Plant and the Eikenhof Booster Pumping Station. The Vereeniging is a water treatment works and a pumping facility, from which treated water is pumped to Rand Water's Zwartkoppies, Eikenhof and Palmiet pumping stations. The Zwartkoppies pumping station provides water to the City of Johannesburg and parts of Ekurhuleni. The Eikenhof pumping station also provides water to the City of Johannesburg, including Soweto, Roodepoort, and Sandton, as well as municipalities in the West Rand and parts of North West province. The Vereeniging facility is supplied with electricity by Emfuleni LM and the Eikenhof pump station is supplied with electricity by City Power. The electricity supply disruptions have led to water supply disruptions in some of the areas listed above.

The meeting last night received detailed reports from Rand Water, Emfuleni LM and City Power on the recent electricity supply interruptions and their impact on Rand Water's water supply systems.

On 7 September 2026, an electrical fault occurred at the Fordsburg City Power substation, which affected pumping at the Rand Water Eikenhof pump station. On 13 September 2026, an Eskom power line supplying the Rand Water Vereeniging facility was damaged by a contractor working for Emfuleni LM. As a result, pumping at both Eikenhof, Zwartkoppies and Vereeniging was reduced.

These two power supply interruptions severely affected water supply systems in Emfuleni LM, the City of Johannesburg, West Rand municipalities, Madibeng and Rustenburg. In both instances, repairs were carried out within hours. However, for technical reasons, once Rand Water's treatment and pumping facilities stop working due to the electricity supply going off, it takes approximately 6 hours for Rand Water to fully start up its systems again, to pump water at full capacity. It then takes time for the water levels in Rand Water's reservoirs to recover, before Rand Water can return to normal supply quantities to the municipalities. Furthermore, once municipal reservoirs become depleted, it can take weeks for the water levels in the reservoirs to recover, particularly if water demand remains high and if the municipalities have insufficient storage and pumping capacity in their municipal water distribution systems.

Consequently, municipal reservoir levels are still recovering in some areas.

As indicated above, the problem is not that there is not enough electricity, the problem is that the maintenance of the municipal electricity distribution networks needs to be improved and the distribution systems need to be strengthened, for example through the construction of booster substations and electricity ring-feeds.

The meeting agreed on several measures to reduce the risk of electricity supply outages resulting in water supply disruptions in future:

- a) To address the increasing electricity outages which have resulted from a combination of equipment and network faults, City Power has implemented additional monitoring, inspection, and preventative measures
- b) In order to strengthen its distribution network, City Power will fast-track the completion of the upgrading of the Eikenhof electricity substation and Mondeor HV Switchyard project, in addition to measures to increase its transformer redundancy
- c) Eskom has deployed a dedicated technical team to assist Emfuleni LM to improve the maintenance and operation of its electricity distribution network, in terms of the Distribution Agency Agreement which is in place between Eskom and Emfuleni LM
- d) City Power has teams with sufficient stocks and other resources in place which are able to respond to any electricity outages immediately
- e) Eskom will provide mobile substations to Rand Water to assist Rand Water where possible to put in place a back-up electricity supply
- f) Rand Water will continue invest in additional alternative complementary electricity sources where feasible.

Together, these projects and interventions will increase electricity supply capacity, introduce greater supply redundancy, and provide alternative electricity supply sources to Rand Water's treatment works and pumping stations, thereby reducing the risk and impact of future outages and improving the reliability of electricity supply to this critical water infrastructure.

Several institutional mechanisms have been put in place to ensure a coordinated approach to resolving these issues. On behalf of Gauteng Premier Panyaza Lesufi, the MEC for COGTA, MEC Jacob Mamobolo, is chairing a weekly intergovernmental coordination meeting, which includes reviewing updates on electricity and water supply issues in the province. In addition, a joint technical working committee has been established, led by DWS, with participation of representatives from the Gauteng Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Rand Water, Emfuleni LM Johannesburg Water, City Power and ESKOM, to identify solutions to ensure that Rand Water obtains a reliable electricity supply. Ongoing meetings will be held to monitor progress and to develop risk mitigation plans which will be presented to the Ministers, Premier and Mayors.

The political principals will be visiting several areas this morning to check the recovery of the municipal distribution systems and the supply of water through water tankers where the systems have still not recovered.

The meeting further agreed that communication to affected communities must be strengthened and that communities should continue to be mobilised to work with government to conserve water and to use water sparingly.

END

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