



Friday, October 20, 2017

Four weeks after Hurricane Maria, packing winds of up to 155 miles an hour, knocked out power to the entire island, 80 percent of Puerto Rico still does not have electricity. Some residents have not had power for 45 days — since Hurricane Irma brushed by after Labor Day.

For Mr. Rodríguez, that means using candles for lighting and a gas stove for cooking. He buys ham and cheese sandwiches and coffee for breakfast.

“The water comes and goes, comes and goes, and it’s just a trickle,” he said. All the food he cooks comes out of cans.

In contrast with Texas after Hurricane Harvey and Florida after Irma, where thousands of repair workers rushed in to restring power lines, only a few hundred electrical workers from outside the island have arrived to help.



Javier Hernández Saurí, a lineman who works for the **Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority**, is concerned about the lack of crews and materials on the island compared to the scale of grid destruction.

The destruction of the power grid is one of Puerto Rico’s biggest long-term challenges, despite the provision of “massive numbers” of generators to temporarily provide electricity to hospitals and other crucial facilities.