

MTN invests R5bn to keep customers connected during load shedding

By [Nqobile Dladla](#)

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MTN said on Wednesday its network availability had improved by 15% as a result of ongoing investment to ensure its mobile network operates effectively during the worst power cuts on record.



A man walks past an MTN logo outside the company's headquarters in Johannesburg. Source: Reuters/Siphiwe Sibeko

As the national power grid crumbles, leaving Africa's most advanced economy in the dark for up to 10 hours a day, mobile operators including MTN, Vodacom, and Telkom are scrambling to ensure their networks stay up and running.

"It's an ongoing battle, but one that we're committed to winning as we fight to provide our customers with a reliable and resilient network," MTN South Africa chief executive Charles Molapisi said.



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With a recently announced investment of R4.5-R5bn into its network to keep customers connected during the power crisis, MTN has deployed more than 20,000 batteries, 5,000 rectifiers and near 900 diesel generators to sites across the country, it said.

To date, more than 5,000 network sites have been upgraded with either battery upgrades, rectifier swaps, backup generators and increased security to protect them from theft and vandalism. In August alone, it upgraded 2,000 sites, MTN said.

"While there was a brief respite in the second quarter of 2023 with a reduction in loadshedding compared to the first quarter, power outages continued to pose a significant challenge to our operations," Molapisi said.

He said theft and vandalism at network sites remained a concern, especially when criminals exploit the darkness during outages to target sites.

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