

## S. Africa's nuclear power plant destructed (sic) by an unknown group

*All politics ... the nuclear plant was not involved.*

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An unknown organization claimed responsibility on Tuesday for sabotaging the Koeberg nuclear power station in Cape Town, South Africa, on the eve of the country's local government elections.

In an e-mail sent to Talk Radio 702, a Johannesburg radio station, the organization claimed that the action aimed at an economy that failed to benefit the poor.

"... As you are fond of electricity cut-offs on the poor and oppressed in South Africa, so taste a bit of that which they taste! And let your businesses lose out, in an economy where the poor see no benefits," read the e-mail.

The e-mail allegedly from the organization, which the radio station did not name, threatened to continue with the raids, the SAPA news agency reported.

Public Enterprises Minister Alec Erwin indicated early on Tuesday that damage at the Koeberg, Africa's only nuclear power station, in December was not accidental but deliberate.

"Let me be very clear on this. The bolt that caused the generator's destruction did not get there by accident," Erwin said.

The damage to one of the generators at Koeberg, reportedly caused by a bolt, has brought about frequent shutdown of the power plant and outages of electricity in the Western Cape Province since December, causing huge economic losses.

South Africa will on Wednesday hold the nationwide municipal elections. But Cape Town is to experience severe electricity interruptions on the election day, which forced the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) in the Western Cape to plan for election under circumstance that there is no power available in the province.

The elections, though described by the IEC as being well prepared, have been marred by violent protests in at least two provinces, aroused by local governments' poor performance in public service delivery.

South African police have carried out an investigation on the e-mail, but gave no details if a hoax was suspected, the SAPA said.

Minister of Minerals and Energy Lindiwe Hendricks also indicated that the damage of the power plant was aiming at the election on Wednesday.

"These events curiously coincide with an important process in the democratic calendar of the country.. It has become clear that the recent event cannot just be linked inadequate transmission or generation capacity. Clearly other forces are at play here," she said on Tuesday.

But the Democratic Alliance (DA), South Africa's leading opposition, pointed finger to Eskom, South Africa's state-owned power supplier and the operator of the Koeberg, and the government led by the African National Congress (ANC).

"It is common cause that there has been a complete neglect of forward planning by Eskom and the Ministry of Public Enterprises for South Africa's energy needs," said Helen Zille, DA mayoral candidate for Cape Town.

"For the ANC to cry 'sabotage' the night before crucial local government elections shows just how desperate they are to disguise their incompetence and mismanagement," Zille said in a statement.