



## MAKING SENSE #5

**Fuel cartels are  
adding darkness,  
pollution and  
cancer to  
Lebanon's misery**

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A ruling establishment historically insulated from accountability for crimes continues to hold power in Lebanon today. Sectarian tensions and political infighting have led to monopolies over vital supply chains, with rationing of public services allowing parallel service structures - often owned by politicians and their affiliates - to emerge and dominate as single-source providers.

The electricity sector is a clear illustration of this dysfunction. Impunity, poor governance and the recent economic collapse forced the shutdown of Electricite du Liban (EDL), the national electricity provider, leading to widespread blackouts filled by diesel generators - now Lebanon's most deadly post-war consequence.

Long before these blackouts, the poor state of the EDL's service had already driven widespread reliance on private diesel generators to make up for electricity rationing. With the blackouts, the influence of diesel generator network owners surged, creating powerful neighbourhood-level structures that greatly affect energy access. Until recently, these networks operated without regulation or oversight.

In 2017, Beirut had over 9,300 diesel units in an area of just 20 square kilometres. By 2023, the power cuts had increased to over 20 hours daily. These generators, assembled locally, release large amounts of greenhouse gases, carcinogens and harmful particles. Data from monitoring since 2010 show the levels of these dangerous substances have been rising.

This article is posted on The National News, to read more:

<https://www.thenationalnews.com/opinion/comment/2024/09/13/lebanon-fuel-crisis-cartel/>