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## **Iraq cuts officials privileges amid power crisis**

*Sunday, 27 Jun, 2010*

AFP reported that Mr Hussein Al Shahrstani oil minister of Iraqi revoked electricity privileges enjoyed by government officials as he took temporary control of the power portfolio amid public fury over rationing.

Mr Shahrstani a key ally of PM Mr Nuri Al Maliki said his measures would redirect much needed supplies to a national grid that currently provides ordinary citizens with power for only one hour in every 5 or less.

He said that it is impossible for anyone who takes responsibility for a few days to end the suffering of the Iraqi people. But I have taken these measures to reduce the problems facing those who have a limited amount of electricity.

Mr Shahrstani said that he had ordered a stop to special supply measures benefiting Iraqi officials who lived in the International Green Zone and other areas of the capital.

The country's daily power generation averages 8,000 MW while demand amid temperatures that have hit 54 degrees Celsius is typically more than 14,000 MW forcing the use of rationing.

Mr Shahrstani said that production hikes ordered at several power stations including ones at Beiji, 200 kilometers north of Baghdad and Nasiriyah, a southern city would increase production by 250 MW.

Mr Maliki accepted the resignation of Mr Karim Wahid who as electricity minister had been the main target of protests over limited power supplies as temperatures across the country soared. He warned that 2 more years of shortages lay ahead as there was no quick fix to the problem, which worsened dramatically in the wake of the US led invasion of the country in 2003.

(Sourced from AFP)

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