



## Rise in Electricity Prices in Tajikistan

Since 1 September 2019, in Tajikistan new electricity tariffs, which were adopted by the government in June 22, 2019 entered into force. From now on, residents of the country have to pay 17% more for electricity, 22.66 Dirams instead of 19.37 Dirams per 1 kilowatt. For industrial and non-industrial consumers, the new tariff is 55.14 Dirams. And the cost of 1 kilowatt of electricity for the Tajik Metallurgical Combine in the winter now (from October 1 to March 31) is 55.14 Dirams.

At the same time, the increase in the cost of electricity does not apply to the main consumer of electricity in the country - SUE Tajik Aluminum Company (TALCO). The previous prices are valid for the company: 11.80 Dirams per kilowatt in the winter and 7.20 dirams in the summer. By the way, according to some experts, the Tajik aluminum company TALCO is closely connected with the family of President Rakhmon. For example, in 2008, then US Ambassador, Tracey Jacobson, called this company "cash cow" of Rakhmon, and the international non-profit organization Wikileaks gave the company the following rating: "Means of generating income for yourself, your family members and your inner circle. Revenues from TALCO do not go to the development of the country; most of them flow to extrabudgetary initiatives and projects, such as the construction of palaces and plentiful government receptions. The population of Tajikistan actually subsidizes TALCO, existing without adequate medical care, education and electricity."

So, if you go back to the question of why electricity is getting more expensive, you can see that in recent years, the Tajik government began to increase electricity prices annually, sometimes twice a year, and this also happens in the winter when electricity is for many the only way to heat a house and cook food, because the country has long ceased to have natural gas. The rise in price also looks surprising given the fact that today several large hydroelectric power stations are functioning stably in the country; the largest of which is the Rogun Hydroelectric Power Station; 2 out of 6 units that already generate electricity.

The Rakhmon regime has repeatedly argued that with the launch of the Rogun Hydroelectric Power Station, the population of Tajikistan will be provided with cheap electricity and the country will become non-volatile, thereby eliminating the restrictions on electricity consumption in winter. However, this year in the winter, electricity restrictions in small towns and areas have been re-established. As a result, it turns out that the population, instead of feeling relieved with the launch of the new hydroelectric power stations, on the contrary received a rapid increase in electricity prices.

According to a survey of the population of Tajikistan conducted by the Khabarkho correspondent, if on average one family of 5 people paid 300-400 Somoni monthly for electricity in the winter, then now this amount will increase to 350-470 Somoni. And this is 30% of the average monthly wage in the country. Consequently, an increase in electricity prices by 17% is quite noticeable for the country's population in the current economic conditions. It is possible that this phenomenon will become permanent and electricity prices will regularly increase annually, even if all units of the largest Rogun Hydroelectric station of the region operate in the country.

The reason for all this is the worst budget crisis in Tajikistan. The fact is that Rakhmon's corrupt regime uses all methods to fill the stolen budget, and traditionally for dictatorships it puts economic problems on the population, which in turn has at least some money due to labor migration. Having realized that at the expense of the people it's possible to replenish the feeder for himself, the Rakhmon's government raises prices for everything that is possible, not just electricity. For example, Tajikistan is one of the countries with the highest rates of growth in taxes, prices for essential goods and products. Thus, Rakhmon continues to blame the complete failure of his economic policy on the people of Tajikistan, who, through blood and sweat, are experiencing various humiliations, leaving a foreign land doing the most difficult work. Such is the true face of the secular anti-Islamic regime of Rakhmon, such is his economic policy!

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