

<http://news.yahoo.com>

Caracas to begin four months of water rationing

2014-May-06



Caracas (AFP) - Water use in Caracas will be rationed for at least four months due to drought, authorities said Tuesday, as Venezuela grapples with shortages of basic goods which have spurred massive anti-government protests.

"We made a special water supply plan that will be released so that our people know the days they will have continuous service, night service and no service," Environment Minister Miguel Leonardo Rodriguez told reporters.

One in every four goods including basic food, hygiene products, medicine and auto parts, however, have already become difficult to find, resulting in long, lengthy lines.

The shortages, rampant crime, inflation and other economic woes have resulted in more than two months of anti-government unrest which has left 41 people dead and more than 700 injured.

Rodriguez said that one of the three reservoirs that supply the Caracas valley with water was below minimum capacity and was closed.

The water supply to the capital and its suburbs, home to five million people, has fallen by 13 percent from 19,500 liters per second to 17,000.

"We hope that (the rationing) will end at the end of August or mid-September" Rodriguez said, placing its termination at an undefined date that depends on how the country's upcoming rainy season goes.

For ten days residents of Caracas's upper- and middle-class eastern neighborhoods have seen their water supply disrupted. Areas such as Petare, a sprawling slum on the city's eastern edge, have also been affected by cuts.

Even when fully operating and unaffected by drought, water supply levels in the capital area are below international standards, capable of providing 340 liters per person per day, which is sufficient for household consumption but falls short of commercial and industrial demands.