

The IAEA,
Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi

March 11, 2022

**Regarding the situation related to the military actions
against Ukrainian nuclear power plants,
and the crises at the Chernobyl and Zaporizhzhya NPPs**

Dear Director General,

For the first time in human history, we are witnessing a situation when military operations are taking place on the territory of nuclear power plants.

As you already know, the Chernobyl nuclear power plant (ChNPP) and the largest operating NPP in Europe in Zaporizhzhya have been forcibly seized by the Russian army. According to the Ukrainian Nuclear Regulatory Inspectorate, in both cases this happened with the use of aerial bombardment. Personnel of these two power plants are being held hostages. According to the Ukrainian side, at the ChNPP the same shift worked for a week without rotation, employees were deprived of access to necessary medicines; at the Zaporizhzhya NPP the personnel were tortured by the Russian side in order to force them to take part in propaganda actions. In Zaporizhzhya NPP buildings have also been damaged by rockets, causing a fire in one of them; firefighters were not immediately allowed to take urgent action, and several firefighters were killed by Russian attackers. Yesterday, it became known that the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, which houses SNF storage facilities, including a wet storage containing about 21,000 fuel elements, was cut off from the electrical grid. A representative of Ukraine's Energoatom expressed justifiable fears that the lack of cooling can lead to decompression of fuel elements, and consequent release of radiation into the environment. The automatic radiation monitoring systems at both plants has been rendered inoperable due to military activities, and missile strikes. Shortly after the attack on the ChNPP, the monitoring system, which was still functioning at that time, registered a 10-20-fold increase in gamma background. The reasons for the latter are still unknown. Russian military equipment used in the attack on Ukraine have passed through the exclusion zone of the Chernobyl NPP, which lead to an active and extensive leakage of radionuclides into the environment.

Each of the above-mentioned events are increasing the risks of a nuclear incident, the scale and consequences of which for European countries could be comparable to Chernobyl and Fukushima.

We consider the above-mentioned actions as acts of nuclear terrorism, with all the concomitant signs. We need your urgent action to prevent weaponization of seized nuclear

power plants or the use of them in Russian military offensive for blackmail or as a weapon of mass destruction!

The IAEA is an international organization with close links and extensive cooperation with Russian nuclear regulator "Rostekhnadzor" and State Nuclear Energy Corporation "Rosatom", which, in turn, has access to the Russian decision-makers responsible for the current military campaign and seizure of Ukrainian nuclear power plants.

We are expecting you to take the following urgent actions:

1. Take all necessary steps and engage *independent* experts from the IAEA on the ground, who are not affiliated with any of the conflicting parties, to keep track and record all facts of violations and incidents related to military actions at the nuclear facilities sites, which pose threats to the nuclear security of the region. It requires *an urgent visit by independent IAEA experts directly to the sites of the facilities seized by the Russian military*.
2. Appeal to the relevant Russian organizations with which the IAEA is in contact, including Russian nuclear regulator "Rostekhnadzor" and State Nuclear Energy Corporation "Rosatom", to exert maximum pressure on the relevant Russian authorities and to act as the contact points between the IAEA independent experts and Russian authorities; to explain to the latter all consequences of possible nuclear incidents, including for the population of the Russian Federation and Belarus.
3. Facilitate providing access to the Chernobyl and Zaporizhzhya NPPs for Ukrainian maintenance crews and Ukrainian personnel for rotation and taking necessary measures to maintain the nuclear power plants in as safe conditions as possible, including restoration of functionality of the automated radiation background monitoring systems. To exert maximum pressure on the relevant Russian authorities to ensure the freedom of operation by the staff and management of the nuclear installations, as well as the ongoing independent oversight by the Ukrainian nuclear regulator SNRIU, including on the ground.
4. Facilitate negotiations with the Russian authorities to withdraw from inhumane treatment of the NPPs' personnel, stop the seizure of nuclear facilities in a sovereign country, end the use of the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone for military operations, and discontinue all military operations which endanger the region's nuclear security as such.
5. Provide the assistance in identifying of the party/parties responsible for a possible nuclear damage at and around Ukrainian nuclear power plants (at present Chernobyl and Zaporizhzhia) seized by the Russian military. According to the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability, the Ukrainian operator(s) cannot be held liable due to the conduct of military operations. The Vienna Convention does not address the issue of liability in the event of

military action. We urge for IAEA to clarify the liability of the Russian Federation for such damages, including related to potential nuclear accidents.

6. Initiate hearings under the 11th special session of the UN General Assembly convened as a part of the "Uniting for Peace" resolution from 1950. At the hearings, work out possible measures to ensure the safety of power plants currently in Ukraine, including the use of UN military peacekeeping forces to maintain security and safety at, above and around those power plants.

Belarusian Antinuclear Campaign

WISE International