



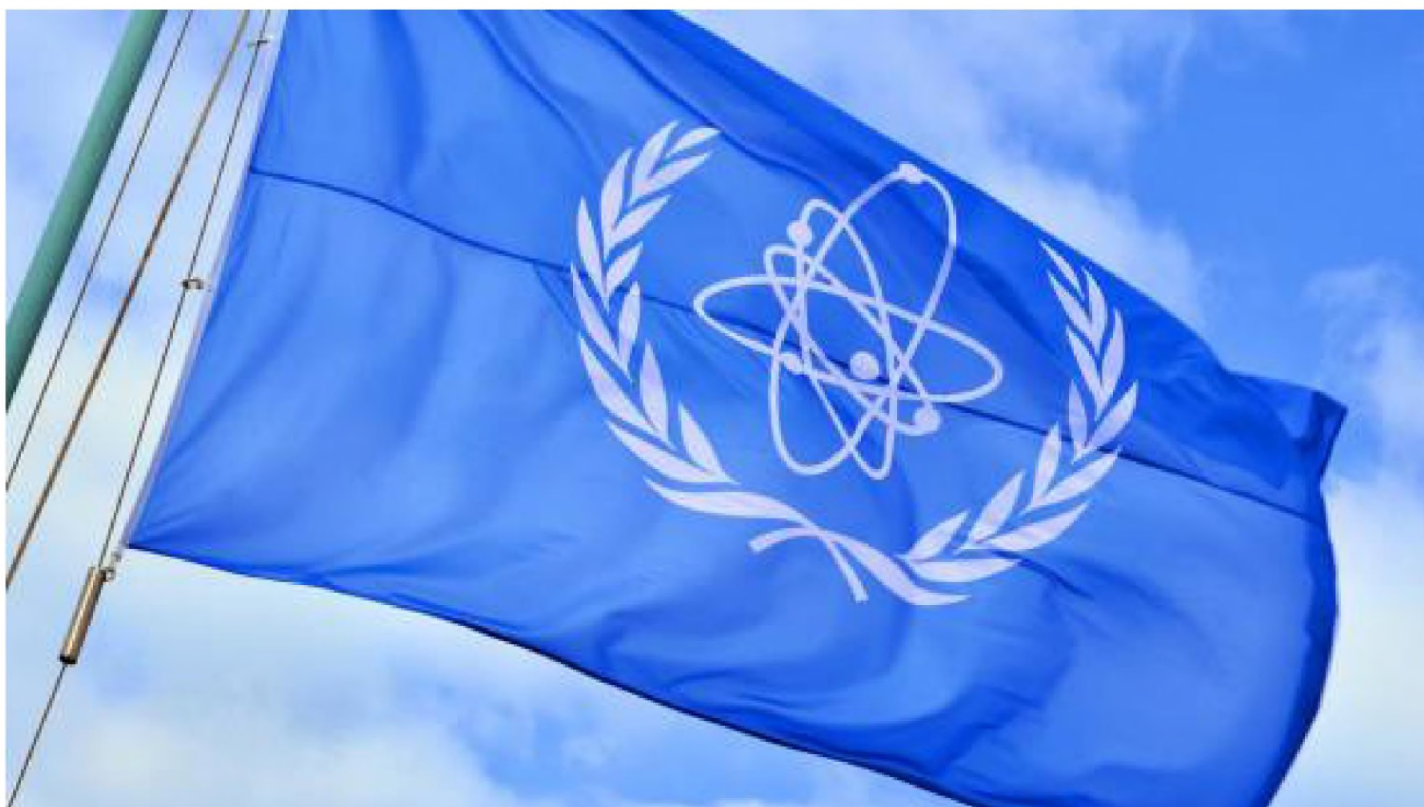
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Update 154 – IAEA Director General Statement on Situation in Ukraine

21 Apr 2023

35/2023

Vienna, Austria



(https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/styles/hd_1920x1080/public/iaeaflag11140x640.jpg?itok=o193TBMi)

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) experts present at Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) have heard shelling almost every day over the past week and at one point were told to shelter at the site because of the potential dangers caused by continued military activity in the region, Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi said today.



The IAEA team's recent reports to headquarters in Vienna further underscore the serious nuclear safety and security risks facing Europe's largest nuclear power plant (NPP) during the military conflict, at a time of increased speculation of imminent military offensives and counter-offensives in the southern Ukrainian region and elsewhere in the country, Director General Grossi said.

"I saw clear indications of military preparations in the area when I visited the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant just over three weeks ago. Since then, our experts at the site have frequently reported about hearing detonations, at times suggesting intense shelling not far from the site. I'm deeply concerned about the situation at the plant," he said.

Director General Grossi said the perilous situation on the ground meant he had to continue pressing for protection of the plant so that there is no attack on the facility and also that the facility is not used to launch attacks. He continues his efforts and negotiations with Ukraine and the Russian Federation.

Adding to the nuclear safety and security risks, the ZNPP continues to rely on the only remaining functioning 750 kilovolt (kV) power line for the external electricity it needs for reactors cooling and other essential nuclear safety and security functions. Before the conflict, the plant had four such off-site power lines available.

A back-up 330 kV power line that was damaged on 1 March on the other side of the Dnipro River from the Russian-controlled ZNPP has still not been repaired, with Ukraine having said military action is preventing its experts from safely accessing the location situated in territory it controls to repair the line.

The nearby Zaporizhzhya Thermal Power Plant (ZTPP) operates the 330 kV open switchyard, through which back-up power has in the past been provided to the ZNPP. The Russian Federation reported last month that Rosatom was working to remove damaged equipment from the open switchyard, with the aim of restoring three 330 kV lines to the grid system in currently Russian-controlled territory. The IAEA team will access the site to assess the situation.



The IAEA team has also reported that the current situation at the ZNPP is having a significant impact on the plant's maintenance capability. Plant management informed the IAEA experts that the scope of maintenance performed during outages on all units in 2022 was reduced compared to the planned scope due to reduced maintenance staff, absence of external contractors who perform a significant part of the work, and a lack of spare parts needed for the maintenance, including critical components. ZNPP currently has only about a quarter of its regular maintenance staff available. New staff are being hired but it will take some time until they are fully trained. The plant said a substantial list of required spare parts has recently been submitted to Rosatom, the Russian state nuclear company.

As a result of the significant reduction of staff, the ZNPP currently does not have a systematic maintenance and in-service inspection schedule. Before restarting any of the reactor units, the site is considering obtaining advice from an engineering organization within Rosatom that will assess the status of the plant and provide recommendations for all structures, systems and components important to safety regarding their maintenance or any necessary replacement before operation. The site considers that this maintenance/replacement work may be undertaken using the services of a centralized Rosenergoatom company that is capable of performing these types of maintenance tasks.

"This shows again the continuing detrimental impact that the current situation on the site is having on the seven indispensable pillars for ensuring nuclear safety and security, in this case pillars two and five on safety and security systems and equipment and logistical supply chain," the Director General said.




The IAEA team has also identified extensive damage to windows in the turbine hall of Unit 4 in a location that appears inconsistent with being caused by the previously reported (</newscenter/pressreleases/update-153-iaea-director-general-statement-on-situation-in-ukraine>) landmine explosions. The IAEA team aims at clarifying the cause of the damage.



On a more positive note, the water level in the Kakhovska Reservoir – which provides water for ZNPP reactor cooling – has gradually been increasing over the past two months and has now returned to normal level, 16.2 metres on 21 April.

As a result of the warmer weather, the operator has started to put reactor Unit 6 in cold shutdown which is expected to be reached by the weekend, leaving only Unit 5 in hot shutdown to produce hot water and steam for the site. The two reactors were in hot shutdown during the winter to provide steam and heating to the ZNPP as well as heating to the nearby city of Enerhodar, where many plant personnel live.

Related resources

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-  [Rafael Mariano Grossi](https://www.iaea.org/about/rafael-grossi) (<https://www.iaea.org/about/rafael-grossi>)

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Last update: 21 Apr 2023

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