

Update 4 – IAEA Director General Statement on Situation in Ukraine

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Markdown Content: Ukraine informed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) today that the country's nuclear power plants were continuing to be operated safely and securely, Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi said, adding that he remained gravely concerned about maintaining their safety and security during the current conflict.

Ukraine's nuclear power programme – 15 reactors at four sites – usually accounts for roughly half its electricity production.

On 27 February, Ukraine's Foreign Ministry informed the IAEA that Russian military forces were advancing close to the largest of the sites – the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) in eastern Ukraine. Additional information received on 28 February from the operator confirmed that the Russian forces were operational near the site but had not entered it at the time of reporting. In this context, Director General Grossi stressed that any military or other action that could threaten the plant's safety or security must be avoided.

The State Nuclear Regulatory Inspectorate of Ukraine (SNRIU) told the IAEA that it was continuing to gather information and in this morning's update to the IAEA, the SNRIU said there had been no change in the "physical protection regime" of the Zaporizhzhya NPP and that its six units were in safe condition.

Director General Grossi said: "I continue to follow developments in Ukraine very closely and with grave concern, especially the conflict's potential impact on the safety and security of the country's nuclear facilities. It is extremely important that the nuclear power plants are not put at risk in any way." He added: "An accident involving the nuclear facilities in Ukraine could have severe consequences for public health and the environment."

Underlining such risks, the SNRIU informed the IAEA on Sunday that missiles had hit the site of a radioactive waste disposal facility in the capital Kyiv, but there was no damage to the building and no reports of a radioactive release.

Director General Grossi said it was of critical importance to maintain the capabilities of operational teams to ensure safety. In addition, vital supply chains should remain available to ensure that necessary services, equipment and components can be delivered to Ukraine's nuclear facilities at all times, for example to carry out any emergency repairs.

Ukraine last week informed the IAEA that Russian forces had taken control of the facilities of the State Specialized Enterprise Chornobyl NPP, located within the Exclusion Zone set up after the 1986 accident. The regulator said today that the shift supervisor at the site had not been replaced since 24 February but that he continued to perform his duties. SNRIU also provided radiation readings from the site which the IAEA assessed as low and in line with near background levels.

Director General Grossi stressed again that staff at all nuclear facilities must be able to work and rest. He reiterated his call upon those in effective control of such sites not to take any actions that could compromise their safety or put them under undue pressure.

The IAEA continues to closely monitor developments in Ukraine, with a special focus on the safety and security of its nuclear power reactors. The IAEA remains in constant contact with its counterpart and will continue to provide regular updates on the situation in Ukraine.

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