

IAEA Head Arrives at Russian-Occupied Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Plant

By [AFP](#)

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IAEA head Rafael Grossi en route to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. **IAEA / AFP**

The head of the UN's nuclear power watchdog arrived at Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant on Wednesday in a rare visit to Europe's largest atomic facility, which is currently controlled by Russian forces.

There have been persistent fears over the safety of the nuclear plant in the southern Zaporizhzhia region, where there has been frequent shelling since Russian troops invaded last year.

Announcing the arrival of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) delegation headed by Rafael Grossi, Ukrainian nuclear power operator Energoatom posted footage of a convoy of civilian and military vehicles marked with the letter Z, a Russian pro-war symbol.

"Raphael Grossi plans to see how the situation at the ZNPP has changed, speak with the

nuclear engineers at the plant, and act as a guarantor of the rotation of members of the IAEA permanent mission," it said on social media.

This is Grossi's second visit to Zaporizhzhia since Russia invaded Ukraine last February and his stated aim is to "assess first-hand the serious nuclear safety and security situation at the facility," the IAEA said.

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The agency has had a team of experts inside the plant since September 2022, but Grossi has described the situation as "still precarious."

Earlier this week, Grossi met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who said it was not possible to restore safety at the plant with Russia in control.

"Without the immediate withdrawal of Russian troops and personnel from the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant and adjacent territory, any initiatives to restore nuclear safety and security are doomed to failure," Zelensky told Grossi.

Renat Karchaa, an advisor to Russia's Rosenergoatom, which runs the facility, said Wednesday ahead of the visit that it would unlikely bring about any major breakthroughs.

"We are far from having any illusions that Grossi's visit will dramatically change anything. For us, this is an ordinary working event," he was cited as saying by Russian news agencies.

"Of course, anything can happen," he added.

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