

UN Nuclear Chief Says 'Very Real' Threat Remains at Moscow-Held Zaporizhzhia Plant

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Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. [IAEA Imagebank / flickr](#)

The possibility of a nuclear disaster at the Russian-held Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant in Ukraine remains “very real,” according to the head of the UN's nuclear watchdog.

Russian forces captured the Zaporizhzhia plant, Europe’s largest, in March 2022 shortly after the Kremlin ordered the invasion of Ukraine.

Regular shelling and drone attacks around the plant have raised the risks of a radioactive disaster, while Kyiv and Moscow have accused each other of planning provocations.

Related article: [Russia Curbs UN Access at Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Plant](#)

Experts from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have been on the ground

monitoring the Zaporizhzhia plant since September 2022.

“The plant’s six reactors have been shut down since mid-2022 — five of them in cold shutdown and one in hot shutdown. But the potential dangers of a major nuclear accident remain very real,” IAEA chief Rafael Grossi told the UN Security Council on Thursday.

Grossi warned that issues with access to power could lead to a disaster at the Moscow-controlled nuclear plant.

Emergency diesel generators are now “the last line of defense against a nuclear accident” after they were activated eight times when the plant lost all off-site power, he added.

“The plant is currently relying on just two lines of external power, and sometimes just one, or for a period the backup power was not properly configured. This demonstrates the highly precarious situation regarding essential off-site power.”

Earlier this month, Grossi said IAEA experts had been blocked from accessing parts of the plant’s reactor halls, which was later confirmed by Russia's Rosatom nuclear agency.

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