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UN Nuclear Agency Head to Visit Kursk Nuclear Plant Next Week

By AFP

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IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi. **Dean Calma / IAEA Imagebank**

UN nuclear agency head Rafael Grossi will visit Russia's Kursk Nuclear Power Plant next week, an agency spokesperson said Thursday, more than two weeks after Ukraine launched a surprise counteroffensive in the region.

"We can confirm [it's planned for] next week," a spokesperson for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said without providing further details.

On Aug. 9, the UN nuclear agency urged Moscow and Kyiv to exercise "maximum restraint" so as to "avoid a nuclear accident with the potential for serious radiological consequences" as fighting between Russian and Ukrainian forces inched closer to the power plant.

Grossi said he was "personally in contact with the relevant authorities of both countries" and would "continue to update the international community as appropriate."

According to the IAEA, the power plant has six units — two in shutdown, two fully operational and two under construction.

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Kyiv claims to have captured dozens of towns and villages in the Kursk region, while tens of thousands of Russian civilians have fled areas impacted by the clashes.

Since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the IAEA has warned both sides regularly of the potential risks to nuclear power plants.

On Saturday, the agency said that the security situation at Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant was "deteriorating" following a nearby drone strike.

The plant, which was seized by Russian forces early in the war, has come under repeated attack, with both Ukraine and Russia pointing the finger at the other.

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