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UN Nuclear Agency Chief Warns of Nuclear Risks During Kursk Plant Visit

By AFP

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UN nuclear watchdog head Rafael Grossi on Tuesday warned during a visit to Russia's Kursk nuclear plant that its proximity to ongoing fighting was "extremely serious" following Ukraine's cross-border offensive into the southwestern Kursk region earlier this month.

Grossi said his tour enabled him to "look at the most important parts" of the plant, which is less than 50 kilometers (30 miles) from fighting between Russian and Ukrainian forces.

"A nuclear power plant of this type so close to a point of contact or military front is an extremely serious fact," he said. "The fact we have military activity a few kilometers, a few miles away from here, make it an immediate point of attention."

"At the end of the day, again, this may sound common sense and simple: Don't attack a nuclear power plant," Grossi said, adding that he was in "close contact" with Russian

authorities and would visit Kyiv next week to talk to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

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Grossi, who noted the Kursk power plant was "operating in a very close to normal conditions," emphasized that it was "important to talk" and "keep dialogue."

He added the Kursk power plant currently was "operating in a very close to normal conditions".

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has repeatedly warned of the dangers of fighting around nuclear plants following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

In the first days of the war, Russian forces seized the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant in southern Ukraine, and also briefly held the decommissioned Chornobyl plant in the north.

Ukraine launched its surprise incursion into Kursk on Aug. 6 and has said it is making advances, even as Russian forces move deeper into eastern Ukraine.

Russian President Vladimir Putin last week accused Ukraine of trying to attack the Kursk nuclear power plant, which is less than 50 kilometers (30 miles) from fighting between Russian and Ukrainian forces.

"I was informed about the impact of drones, I was shown some of the remnants of those, signs of impact they had," Grossi said on Tuesday.

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