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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Drone Strikes Protective Cover at Chernobyl Nuclear Plant, Kyiv Says

February 14, 2025

State Emergency Service of Ukraine

A Russian drone struck a protective shelter at Ukraine's Chernobyl nuclear power plant overnight, Ukrainian officials and the UN's nuclear agency said Friday.

"Last night, a Russian attack drone with a high-explosive warhead struck the shelter protecting the world from radiation at the destroyed 4th power unit of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky wrote on social media.

"The fire was extinguished. Currently, radiation levels have not increased," he added.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) confirmed an explosion at the New Safe Confinement, a massive steel and concrete structure built to contain radiation from the plant's 1986 meltdown.

The agency said radiation levels inside and outside the facility remain normal and "stable."

Embed:

> Last night, a Russian attack drone with a high-explosive warhead struck the shelter protecting the world from radiation at the destroyed 4th power unit of the Chornobyl Nuclear Power Plant.
>
> This shelter was built by Ukraine together with other countries of Europe and the world,... pic.twitter.com/mLTGeDYgPT
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> — Volodymyr Zelenskyy / Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) February 14, 2025

The IAEA, which has maintained a team at Chernobyl since the early stages of Russia's full-scale invasion, published images showing the drone on fire after crashing into the shelter.

"The only country in the world that attacks such sites, occupies nuclear power plants, and wages war without any regard for the consequences is today's Russia," Zelensky said.

Ukraine's air force reported that Russia launched more than 100 drones across the country overnight, including attack drones targeting northern regions where the Chernobyl plant is located.

Moscow later denied that its military struck the nuclear plant.

The Chernobyl disaster occurred in 1986 when a reactor exploded during a botched safety test, sending radiation across Europe and forcing tens of thousands to evacuate. Soviet authorities initially covered up the catastrophe before later downplaying its severity.

To contain the radiation, a concrete and steel sarcophagus was built over the damaged reactor. In 2016, the $2 billion, 36,000-ton New Safe Confinement structure — funded by Western nations, Ukraine and Russia — was slid over the old sarcophagus.

AFP contributed reporting.

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