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Rosatom Prepares Final Staff Evacuation From Bushehr Nuclear Plant

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The Bushehr nuclear power plant. **Tasnim News Agency**

Russia's state nuclear corporation Rosatom said late Wednesday that it will carry out a final evacuation of its employees from Iran's Bushehr nuclear power in the coming days, while a group of "volunteers" will remain at the facility to ensure that it remains operational.

"More than 200 people are expected to leave [Bushehr] and depart for Armenia," Rosatom CEO Alexei Likhachyov told Russian state media.

According to the Interfax news agency, around 320 Russian specialists remained at the nuclear power plant as of late last week. More than 400 others were evacuated earlier as U.S.-Israeli attacks on Iran intensified.

Likhachyov said "up to 50 volunteers" will stay at the Bushehr plant after this week's final evacuation to "ensure the operability of construction equipment, the vital functions of the construction camp," as well as other facilities.

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Rosatom was in the process of building two new reactors at the nuclear plant when the United States and Israel launched their war on Iran on Feb. 28.

The premises of Bushehr were struck at least three times last month. Iran's atomic energy organization and Rosatom said the plant itself had not been damaged.

The UN's nuclear watchdog has called for "maximum restraint to avoid nuclear safety risks."

Located in southwestern Iran, the Bushehr nuclear power plant was built with Rosatom's assistance and connected to the national grid in 2011.

Bushehr remains the country's only operational nuclear power facility, with a gross capacity of 1,000 megawatts.

Likhachyov has said that 72 metric tons of nuclear fuel and 210 metric tons of spent fuel are currently housed at the power plant.

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