

Calling on Russia to return full control of Ukraine's nuclear facilities to their rightful sovereign owner: UK statement to UN Security Council

Thank you President, and thank you to Director-General Grossi for briefing us once again on the situation in Ukraine.

The United Kingdom remains deeply concerned about the ongoing impacts of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine and, in the context of today's meeting, its effects on nuclear safety.

The Council discussed Russia's reckless actions at the Ukrainian nuclear facilities, including the Chernobyl nuclear site and the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant at the start of the invasion.

On 3 March, the IAEA Board of Governors adopted a resolution calling for Russia to cease all actions against and at all nuclear facilities in Ukraine, so that the competent Ukrainian authorities could regain full control and ensure their safe and secure operation, and the IAEA could resume their important safeguards verification activities.

Now, over five months later, Russia's control of the Zaporizhzhia Plant continues. The competent Ukrainian authorities and IAEA inspectors are still prevented from properly carrying out their essential duties.

As IAEA Director General Grossi has said, Russia's actions have violated almost all of his seven pillars of nuclear safety and security. Russia's actions are contrary to the principles of the Convention of Nuclear Safety and other international nuclear safety conventions, and put at jeopardy the safety of millions who would be affected by a nuclear incident in Ukraine.

In light of this, and despite Russia's continued lies and obfuscation in this chamber about its brutal and irresponsible assault on Ukraine, we should be clear. It is Russia's continued invasion and military presence that is putting the plant at risk and thereby endangering the local population, the wider region and the entire international community.

President,

We welcome Director General Grossi's efforts to strengthen nuclear safety and security in Ukraine in challenging circumstances, and the tireless, heroic efforts of the Ukrainian nuclear facilities staff, despite the immense pressure they are under.

We reiterate our call for IAEA inspectors to be permitted access to all

nuclear facilities in Ukraine to address nuclear safety, security and safeguard concerns, in a manner that respects Ukraine's sovereignty over its territory and infrastructure.

In this regard, we note with appreciation Foreign Minister Kuleba's letter to Mr Grossi and the Secretary-General on this issue.

And we once again call on Russia immediately to withdraw its forces from Ukraine, and return full control of all Ukraine's nuclear facilities to their rightful sovereign owner to ensure their safe and secure operation.