

Russia is playing roulette with nuclear safety: UK statement at UN Security Council

Thank you President, thank you Secretary-General, thank you Director General Grossi.

I would like to start by commending IAEA Director General Grossi and his staff for their visit to Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant under extremely challenging circumstances. We welcome the IAEA's ongoing presence there. I also offer my thanks to Ukraine for helping facilitate the visit.

The IAEA has assessed that the physical integrity of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant has been violated several times. With the publication of today's report, the IAEA has confirmed the presence of Russian military personnel, vehicles and equipment in the plant.

We understand that in some cases, Russian military equipment has been as close as 60 metres to the nuclear reactors.

The report also confirms the immense stress and pressure under which the brave Ukrainian staff are working. They are no longer workers, but hostages, being held at gunpoint.

By choosing to invade a nuclear power plant, and putting Zaporizhzhia in the cross-fire, Russia is playing roulette with nuclear safety.

As long as Russia's occupation of the plant continues, its safe and secure operation cannot be ensured.

Any measures to address nuclear safety at the plant should therefore involve the full withdrawal of Russian troops and personnel.

President, this is the third meeting Russia has called on this issue in recent weeks. But we should be under no illusion.

The situation at Zaporizhzhia is entirely of Russia's making.

It is Russia's invasion that has disrupted the operation of nuclear facilities across Ukraine.

It is Russia that is jeopardising the safety of millions in the region who would be affected by a nuclear incident.

And it is Russia that can resolve the situation by immediately withdrawing its forces from Zaporizhzhia, and all of Ukraine, and ceasing its senseless and reckless aggression.

Thank you President.