

Ukraine: G7 Foreign Ministers' statement on Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant

We, the G7 Foreign Ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, and the High Representative of the European Union, re-reiterate our strongest condemnation of the ongoing unprovoked and unjustifiable war of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. The Russian Federation must immediately withdraw its troops from within Ukraine's internationally recognized borders and respect Ukraine's territory and sovereignty.

In that context, we demand that Russia immediately hand back full control to its rightful sovereign owner, Ukraine, of the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant as well as of all nuclear facilities within Ukraine's internationally recognized borders to ensure their safe and secure operations. Ukrainian staff operating the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant must be able to carry out their duties without threats or pressure. It is Russia's continued occupation control of the plant that endangers the region.

We remain profoundly concerned by the serious threat that the occupation seizure of Ukrainian nuclear facilities and other actions by Russian armed forces pose to the safety and security of these facilities, significantly raising the risk of a nuclear accident or incident and endangering the population of Ukraine, neighboring states and the international community. They It also undermines the IAEA's ability to monitor Ukraine's peaceful nuclear activities for safeguarding purposes.

We welcome and support IAEA Director General Grossi's efforts to strengthen nuclear safety and security in Ukraine and we thank the Director General and the IAEA staff for their steadfast commitment in this regard. Against this background, we underline the importance of facilitating a mission of IAEA experts to the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant to address nuclear safety, security and safeguard concerns, in a manner that while respecting full Ukrainian sovereignty over its territory and infrastructure. We strongly endorse the importance of the Seven Pillars of Nuclear Safety and Security as outlined by Director General Grossi.

We reiterate our full and continued support for the IAEA. IAEA staff must be able to access all nuclear facilities in Ukraine safely and without impediment, and engage directly, and without interference, with the Ukrainian personnel responsible for the operation of these facilities. The safety of all individuals implementing these efforts must be addressed to strengthen nuclear safety, security and safeguards in Ukraine.

We encourage all countries to support the IAEA's efforts.

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office summons Chinese Ambassador, Zheng Zeguang over Beijing's Aggressive escalation against Taiwan

Press release

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office has today summoned the Chinese Ambassador.



The Foreign Secretary instructed Sir Tim Barrow, Second Permanent Under-Secretary for the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office to summon the Ambassador to China, Zheng Zeguang. He was summoned over Beijing's aggressive and wide-ranging escalation against Taiwan over the last week in response to Speaker Pelosi's visit on 2 August.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

The UK and partners have condemned in the strongest terms China's escalation in the region around Taiwan, as seen through our recent G7 statement.

I instructed officials to summon the Chinese Ambassador to explain his country's actions. We have seen increasingly aggressive behaviour and rhetoric from Beijing in recent months, which threaten peace and stability in the region. The United Kingdom urges China to resolve any differences by peaceful means, without the threat or use of force or coercion.

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Vice Admiral Sir Chris Gardner KBE appointed as new SDA Chief Executive Officer

Vice Admiral Sir Chris Gardner KBE will replace Ian Booth, whose five-year appointment as CEO of the SDA comes to an end on 3 September 2022.

The SDA is an executive agency of the Ministry of Defence (MOD), and was established in April 2018 to manage the procurement, in-service support, and disposal of UK nuclear submarines.

Vice Admiral Sir Chris will take on this vital role within defence and ensure the SDA continues to provide support to the Defence Nuclear Enterprise and Continuous At Sea Deterrent by safely delivering available, capable and reliable in-service submarines and systems.

On behalf of Director General Nuclear and the First Sea Lord, the SDA CEO will lead the day-to-day support and maintenance operations of Trafalgar, Astute and Vanguard Class submarines; and lead the design and construction of all new UK submarines including the Astute Class, the Dreadnought Class and the development of the next generation attack submarine concept.

Incoming CEO of the SDA Vice Admiral Sir Chris Gardner KBE said:

I am delighted and honoured to have been appointed as the new CEO of the SDA. I am looking forward to working with my new team on this area of vital Defence interest and continuing to deliver for the Royal Navy. Best of all, I am really looking forward to returning to my submarine roots.

Vice Admiral Sir Chris started his career as a Royal Navy Logistics Officer, before taking on various roles, including the Military Assistant to Director General Fleet Support and the Commander Logistics on HMS ARK ROYAL.

After reaching the rank of Commodore, he became the Head of Capability Improvement in the MOD and was promoted to Vice Admiral in 2019 where he was appointed as Defence Equipment and Support's Royal Navy lead for the acquisition and in-service support of the surface fleet.

Director General Defence Nuclear Vanessa Nicholls said:

I am delighted to welcome Vice Admiral Sir Chris Gardner KBE to the Defence Nuclear Enterprise as the new CEO of the SDA. He brings a

wealth of operational experience to the role at a pivotal time for the UK Submarine Programme. I look forward to working with him.

Competition for Vice Admiral Sir Chris' position was held earlier in the year. As with all senior Civil Service appointments, fair and open competition was ensured, with recruitment of the role being overseen by the Civil Service Commissioner.

Major projects progress leads to milestone for SIXEP Continuity Plant

The new build SIXEP Continuity Plant (SCP) at Sellafield has achieved a major delivery milestone completing the manufacture and initial testing of 2 large pressure vessels.

Once operational, the plant will contain 7 of the bespoke stainless-steel vessels which help to treat liquid waste, acting as the 'kidneys' of the Sellafield site filtering out nuclear material before being safely discharged to sea.

Once manufactured, the vessels were loaded into a purpose-built rig to undergo a series of initial operating tests.

Manufacturing the 2 vessels, loading them into the rig, and the rig being ready to receive them, was the basis for the milestone. Testing will now continue for the remainder of the year and if successful, manufacturing of the project's remaining 5 vessels will go ahead.

The SCP facility is being delivered by the Programme and Project Partners at Sellafield and will ensure the existing Site Ion Exchange Effluent Plant facility, which has been running since 1985, can continue its vital work for decades to come, playing a vital role in Sellafield's purpose to create a clean and safe environment for future generations.

The project team worked alongside Carlisle based Bendalls Engineering to design and manufacture the vessels.

Simon Wilcock, SCP's project director, said:

The project has delivered its first project wide objective ahead of schedule which is a huge achievement for the team and our supplier Bendalls Engineering.

One of the benefits of the Programme and Project Partners approach is the ability to engage suppliers much earlier than would usually

be the case if we followed a traditional client-contractor arrangement.

By engaging our suppliers earlier, we can put more time into working together to understand requirements and influence the design. We're then able to reach better outcomes and avoid issues arising during manufacturing.

Ben Carter, Bendalls Engineering project manager, said:

The Programme and Project Partners model has changed the whole dynamic of how a contract for Sellafield has been traditionally executed.

By engaging with the client throughout the design stage, and building a whole team approach throughout, we've delivered a highly demanding project on time and to the highest quality.

All children aged 1 to 9 in London to be offered a dose of polio vaccine

Following the discovery of type 2 vaccine-derived poliovirus in sewage in north and east London, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has advised that a targeted inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) booster dose should be offered to all children between the ages of 1 and 9 in all London boroughs.

This will ensure a high level of protection from paralysis and help reduce further spread of the virus.

Nationally the overall risk of paralytic polio is considered low because most people are protected from this by vaccination.

Many countries globally provide an additional dose of polio-containing vaccine as part of their childhood vaccination schedule. The NHS in London will contact parents when it's their child's turn to come forward for a booster or catch-up polio dose – parents should take up the offer as soon as possible.

The programme will start with the areas affected, where the poliovirus has been detected and vaccination rates are low. This will be followed by rapid rollout across all boroughs.

This booster dose will be in addition to the NHS childhood vaccination catch-

up campaign across London, where childhood vaccination uptake is lower than the rest of the country. It's important all children aged 1 to 9 – even if up to date with their vaccinations – accept this vaccine when offered to further strengthen their protection against the poliovirus.

Following the findings earlier this year of type 2 poliovirus (PV2) collected from the Beckton sewage treatment works, further upstream sampling undertaken by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has now identified at least one positive sample of the poliovirus, currently present in parts of the following boroughs:

- Barnet
- Brent
- Camden
- Enfield
- Hackney
- Haringey
- Islington
- Waltham Forest

The sampling has also detected the virus in lower concentrations and frequency in areas adjacent to the Beckton catchment area to the South (immediately below the Thames) and to the east of Beckton. However, it is not clear whether the virus has established itself in these areas or if the detections are due to people from the affected area visiting these neighbouring areas.

The level of poliovirus found and the high genetic diversity among the PV2 isolates suggests that there is some level of virus transmission in these boroughs which may extend to the adjacent areas. This suggests that transmission has gone beyond a close network of a few individuals.

A total of 116 PV2 isolates have been identified in 19 sewage samples collected in London between 8 February and 5 July this year, but most are vaccine-like virus and only a few have sufficient mutations to be classified as vaccine derived poliovirus (VDPV2).

VDPV2 is of greater concern as it behaves more like naturally occurring 'wild' polio and may, on rare occasions, lead to cases of paralysis in unvaccinated individuals.

UKHSA is working closely with health agencies in New York and Israel alongside the World Health Organisation to investigate the links between the poliovirus detected in London and recent polio incidents in these 2 other countries.

Dr Vanessa Saliba, Consultant Epidemiologist at UKHSA, said:

No cases of polio have been reported and for the majority of the population, who are fully vaccinated, the risk is low. But we know the areas in London where the poliovirus is being transmitted have

some of the lowest vaccination rates. This is why the virus is spreading in these communities and puts those residents not fully vaccinated at greater risk.

Polio is a serious infection that can cause paralysis but nationally the overall risk is considered low because most people are protected by vaccination. The last case of polio in the UK was in 1984, but decades ago before we introduced the polio vaccination programme around 8,000 people would develop paralysis every year.

It is vital parents ensure their children are fully vaccinated for their age. Following JCVI advice all children aged 1 to 9 years in London need to have a dose of polio vaccine now – whether it's an extra booster dose or just to catch up with their routine vaccinations. It will ensure a high level of protection from paralysis. This may also help stop the virus spreading further.

Jane Clegg, Chief Nurse for the NHS in London said:

While the majority of Londoners are protected from polio, the NHS will shortly be contacting parents of eligible children aged 1 to 9 years old to offer them a top-up dose to ensure they have maximum protection from the virus.

We are already reaching out to parents and carers of children who aren't up to date with their routine vaccinations, who can book a catch-up appointment with their GP surgery now and for anyone not sure of their child's vaccination status, they can check their Red Book.

UKHSA, working with MHRA, has already increased sewage surveillance to assess the extent of spread of the virus and are currently sampling 8 sites across London.

A further 15 sites in London will start sewage sampling in mid-August, and 10 to 15 sites will be stood up nationally to determine if poliovirus is spreading outside of London.