

Ukraine: nuclear watchdog findings on Zaporizhzhia tally with information from local sources



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Russian military activity endangering the site, with staff reportedly abducted and tortured

‘Russia bears primary responsibility for the potentially devastating consequences of a nuclear accident’ - Denis Krivosheev

Responding to the International Atomic Energy Agency’s findings that Russia is stationing forces in the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, confirming information that Amnesty International received in August, Denis Krivosheev, Amnesty International’s Eastern Europe Deputy Director, said:

“By occupying the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, Russian forces are not only endangering those in the plant and its surroundings, but also heightening the risk of a nuclear catastrophe across the region. “By placing its forces on the territory of the plant and in its immediate vicinity, Russia bears primary responsibility for the potentially devastating consequences of a nuclear accident. “On top of the obvious dangers of militarising the power plant, a local resident told Amnesty that Ukrainians, including staff who Russian forces suspect of documenting their activities near the plant, have reportedly been subjected to brutal reprisals. “Some were abducted and tortured in the basement of the building previously used by the Security Service of Ukraine. “Amnesty International calls for full demilitarisation of the power plant and its immediate surroundings.”

Last month, Amnesty was informed by a local resident and a

member of the plant's staff that Russian military personnel were restricting the movement of staff and also subjecting them to intrusive personal searches. Amnesty was unable to verify these worrying allegations from a number of other sources. However, the IAEA findings confirm the presence of Russian troops on the plant and restrictions to staff movement.

The IAEA has also reported physical damage to the power plant's facilities as a result of military activity in the vicinity, including shelling. The nuclear watchdog said its team observed "the presence of Russian military personnel, vehicles and equipment at various places at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, including several military trucks on the ground floor of the Unit 1 and Unit 2 turbine halls, and military vehicles stationed under the overpass connecting the reactor units". It called for "the immediate establishment of a nuclear safety and security protection zone".

Amnesty's local sources said that the damage was the result of Russian forces firing mortars from occupied Ukrainian territory, allegedly to blame Ukrainian forces. Amnesty has been unable to verify these claims but is concerned to hear the IAEA confirming damage resulting from shelling, including on dates specifically described by Amnesty's local sources.

The IAEA stopped short of naming either side as responsible for the shelling and has demanded that both sides cease all such military activity.

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