

Ukraine and Russia blame each other for shelling Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant

From CNN's Radina Gigova, Darya Tarasova and Olga Vitovych



The Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant on October 14. (Alexander Ermochenko/Reuters)

Ukraine and Russia on Sunday blamed each other for recent shelling at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant.

Ukraine's national nuclear power company Energoatom said in a statement Sunday that Russian shelling has hit the plant's infrastructure more than 12 times.

"As a result, the communication overpasses with special corps, chemically desalinated water storage tanks, steam generators' blowdown system, auxiliary systems of one of the

two station-wide diesel engines and other equipment of the station infrastructure were damaged," Energoatom said. "Three hits were also recorded near the 'Raiduha' ('Rainbow') substation."

Energoatom said "the nature and list of damaged equipment" at the plant indicate that the aim was to disable "exactly the infrastructure that was necessary to launch power units 5 and 6 and resume electricity production by Zaporizhzhia NPP for the needs of Ukraine."

Russia's Ministry of Defense also reported shelling at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant Saturday and Sunday, saying it was the result of artillery fired by the Ukrainian military.

Russia's Ministry of Defense claimed the shelling was carried out from the area of the town of Marganets, near Dnipro, controlled by the Armed Forces of Ukraine. "The enemy's firepower was suppressed by return fire from Russian artillery units," Russia's Ministry of Defense said in a statement.

"The radiation situation in the area of the nuclear power plant remains normal," the Russian Defense Ministry said, adding experts from IAEA and Russia's State Nuclear Energy Corporation, Rosatom, will assess the possible damage.

CNN is not able to verify the claims by Energoatom and the Russian Defense Ministry.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said in a statement Sunday that powerful explosions shook the area of the plant Saturday evening and Sunday morning. More than a dozen blasts were heard within a short period of time Sunday morning local time, "in what appeared to be renewed shelling both close to and at the site" of the plant, IAEA said.

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UN nuclear agency: Powerful explosions shake area of Zaporizhzhia power plant

From CNN's Radina Gigova



The Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant on October 29. (Carl Court/Getty Images)

Powerful explosions shook the area of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant Saturday evening and Sunday morning, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The statement described the explosions as "abruptly ending a period of relative calm at the facility and further underlining the urgent need for measures to help prevent a nuclear accident there."

IAEA experts at the plant reported that more than a dozen blasts were heard within a short period of time Sunday morning local time, "in what appeared to be renewed shelling both close to and at the site of Europe's largest nuclear power plant," IAEA said.

The IAEA team could also see some of the explosions from their windows, the agency said.

"The news from our team yesterday and this morning is extremely disturbing. Explosions occurred at the site of this major nuclear power plant, which is completely unacceptable. Whoever is behind this, it must stop immediately. As I have said many times before, you're playing with fire," Rafael Grossi, IAEA director general, said in the statement.

Based on information provided by the plant management, the IAEA team said there had been damage to some buildings, systems and equipment at the plant's site, "but none of them so far critical for nuclear safety and security," IAEA said.

There are no reports of casualties and IAEA experts are in "close contact" with the site management about the situation on the ground, IAEA said.

Grossi "renewed his urgent appeal to both sides in the conflict to agree and implement a nuclear safety and security zone around the ZNPP as soon as possible," according to the statement, which adds that Grossi in recent months "has engaged in intense consultations with Ukraine and Russia about establishing such a zone, but so far without an agreement."

"I'm not giving up until this zone has become a reality. As the ongoing apparent shelling demonstrates, it is needed more than ever," Grossi said in the statement.

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Top Russian official warns of possible nuclear accident at Zaporizhzhia

Reuters

A view shows the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant in the course of Russia-Ukraine conflict outside Enerhodar in the Zaporizhzhia region, Russian-controlled Ukraine, October 14, 2022. REUTERS/Alexander Ermochenko

LONDON, Nov 21 (Reuters) - The head of Russia's state-run atomic energy agency, Rosatom, warned on Monday there was a risk of a nuclear accident at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, Europe's largest, following renewed shelling over the weekend.

Moscow and Kyiv have traded accusations of shelling the facility for months since Russian forces took control of it in March, shortly after invading Ukraine. Renewed shelling on Sunday triggered fresh fears of a possible disaster at the site.

"The plant is at risk of a nuclear accident. We were in negotiations with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) all night," Interfax quoted Rosatom CEO Alexei Likhachev as saying.

Rosatom has controlled the facility through a subsidiary since President Vladimir Putin in October ordered Russia to formally seize the plant and transfer Ukrainian staff to a Russian entity. Kyiv says the transfer of assets amounts to theft.

The IAEA has called for the creation of a security zone around the plant, something Likhachev said would only be possible if it was approved by the United States.

"I think the large distance between Washington and Zaporizhzhia should not be an argument for the United States to delay the decision on a security zone," Interfax quoted him as saying.

The Rosatom head also said it appeared Kyiv was willing to "accept" a "small nuclear accident" at the nuclear power station

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"This will be a precedent that will forever change the course of history. Therefore everything must be

done so that no one has in their minds to violate the security of the nuclear power plant," TASS quoted him as saying.

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