

**STATEMENT  
BY MINISTER OF ENERGY OF UKRAINE  
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at the 69<sup>th</sup> General Conference  
of the International Atomic Energy Agency  
Agenda Item 7 General Debate  
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**Mr./Madam President,  
Director General,  
Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,**

For more than a decade, Ukraine has endured Russia's aggression, which today directly threatens nuclear safety, security, and the credibility of the non-proliferation regime. It began with the illegal occupation of Crimea and the seizure of the Sevastopol research reactor, continued with the occupation of parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, and—owing to the lack of accountability—culminated in escalating attacks against Ukrainian nuclear sites.

In fact, the world witnessed the first full-scale military occupation of a nuclear site in 2022, when Russian forces seized the Chornobyl Exclusion Zone, including the industrial site and supporting laboratories. During that occupation, laboratories were looted of instruments, computers, and specialized radiological equipment; vehicles and other assets were taken or damaged, and elements of safety and monitoring systems were destroyed. This behaviour is fundamentally incompatible with nuclear safety culture and illustrates the scale of disregard for international norms that would later be repeated at other Ukrainian nuclear facilities.

This pattern has culminated in the ongoing occupation of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant - the largest in Europe - posing unprecedented risks to nuclear safety and security.

Relentless missile, glide-bomb, and drone attacks have severely damaged Ukraine's energy system and civilian infrastructure, killing civilians and creating persistent risks for Ukraine, Europe, and the global framework for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

**Distinguished delegates,**

Three and a half years ago Russia has attacked with heavy military equipment and occupied a civilian nuclear facility of Ukraine - the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power

Plant, blocking by force and terror the legitimate Ukrainian regulatory and operational control over the plant, which is an integral property of Ukraine.

The plant is currently operating under conditions of beyond-design-basis threat - a mode neither foreseen structurally nor procedurally. Its impacts cannot be fully assessed while the facility remains under military occupation.

Since establishing military control over the Zaporizhzhia NPP, the Russian Federation has allowed systemic and critically dangerous deformations in the technical functioning of this nuclear facility. This includes not only the destruction of the main water supply source for reactor cooling caused by the demolition of the Kakhovka dam, but also repeated disconnections of the plant from the Ukrainian power grid, which have already led to nine full blackouts of the facility - a condition that is a direct precursor to a nuclear accident. Since May this year only one of the ten original power lines remains functional due to Russian strikes, increasing the risk of a total blackout. We therefore urge Member States, the IAEA, and all relevant partners to take every possible measure—including security guarantees, time-bound ceasefire windows, unhindered access for repair crews, and the provision of specialized equipment—to enable immediate restoration works on the remaining backup line and the rapid re-establishment of multiple independent off-site power connections.

The prolonged maintenance of the ZNPP in cold shutdown mode, under the supervision of unidentified outside individuals and without access for the legitimate Ukrainian operator and regulator is a violation of all seven indispensable nuclear safety and security pillars and the five principles for ZNPP protection. No nuclear power plant in the world was designed or licensed to remain for years in cold shutdown, and none has been kept in such a state under military occupation and physical degradation. Therefore, any talk of a quick restart of the ZNPP power units is technically unfounded, unsafe, and cannot even be seriously considered under the present conditions.

In this context, the public statements of the President of the Russian Federation —an alleged war criminal wanted by the International Criminal Court - on 2 September 2025 regarding the introduction of new, unknown systems of management and control over the plant must be regarded as evidence of an attempt to use the ZNPP as a military instrument in the ongoing war against Ukraine and deliberate escalation of the nuclear safety threat.

### **Distinguished delegates,**

Since March 2022, the Zaporizhzhia NPP has faced a deep humanitarian crisis. Ukrainian personnel are working under constant pressure, intimidation, and

fear. Many have been unlawfully detained, tortured, or even killed. There are employees that still remain in captivity or are missing. This is not only a matter of human rights - it directly undermines nuclear safety, as the plant suffers from severe understaffing and the absence of many qualified specialists, who are essential for safe operations.

We have documented cases where staff from the Zaporizhzhia Thermal Power Plant—who lack the requisite training, licensing, and experience to operate a nuclear power plant—have been moved into functions at ZNPP. At the same time, rotation teams have been brought in from other Russian NPPs, unfamiliar with ZNPP’s specific design, documentation, and operating culture. Such substitutions and forced rotations further degrade safety margins and increase the probability of human-factor errors.

### **Distinguished delegates,**

Russia has openly signaled intentions to restart the Zaporizhzhia NPP and illegally connect it to the occupied-territory grid. Statements by Rosatom officials point in this direction. Such attempts would further erode safety margins and contravene international norms.

Ukraine calls on the IAEA and its Member States to intensify its efforts to establish a temporary international control mechanism over the ZNPP to demilitarize the facility, ensure full access for IAEA experts to all areas of the plant, and return the plant to Ukraine's sovereign control.

### **Distinguished delegates,**

Russia’s actions stand in direct violation of the IAEA Statute and demonstrate persistent non-compliance with resolutions of the Board of Governors and the General Conference. By occupying the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant together with its nuclear fuel - which is the sovereign property of Ukraine - Russia has acted illegally, undermining the global non-proliferation regime and eroding trust in the international safeguards system. In plain terms, these actions are nothing less than nuclear piracy.

If a state so brazenly disregards nuclear safety culture, why does it still hold a seat on the Agency’s Board of Governors—while that very Agency is tasked with upholding that culture?

### **Distinguished delegates,**

Let me remind you that on 14th February this year, Russia carried out a deliberate drone attack on the New Safe Confinement at Chornobyl NPP - a unique international project designed to contain the legacy of the 1986 disaster. With a single strike, Russia compromised the integrity of this critical facility, increasing the risk of radioactive contamination.

Since the beginning of 2025, more than 549 fly-overs have been recorded within the 30-kilometer observation zones around Ukrainian nuclear power plants, including drone and missile flights directly over the sanitary protection zones.

Russian deliberate air strikes on Ukrainian energy infrastructure led to the loss of external power supply to Ukrainian nuclear power plants for 13 times, since the start of the full-scale invasion.

Nuclear facilities must never become targets of war, and Ukraine calls on the international community to take urgent measures to prevent further escalations.

### **Distinguished delegates,**

We are grateful to the IAEA for its permanent presence at Ukrainian NPPs and for supporting safe operations under these unprecedented conditions.

We highly value the deployment of monitoring missions to Ukraine's substations, as well as the technical assistance, safety equipment, and political support provided by Member States. Such solidarity helps Ukraine manage immediate risks and defends the very foundations of nuclear safety from erosion by military aggression.

Despite the war, our vision is to develop a modern and resilient nuclear sector through the construction of new reactors, the introduction of small modular reactors, and the modernization of safety and security frameworks. These priorities will be vital for Ukraine's recovery.

But let us be clear: the continued occupation and militarization of the Zaporizhzhia NPP is a global challenge. It threatens the credibility of the international community, the integrity of the non-proliferation regime, and the principles of nuclear safety.

Nuclear safety cannot be compromised. Nuclear blackmail cannot be tolerated. The occupation of nuclear facilities cannot be normalized.

Ukraine calls on all Member States to stand united, to deliver a strong and coordinated response, and to reaffirm that peace, security, and international law must prevail without exception - and that nuclear energy must never be turned into a weapon of war.

**Thank you!**