



Security Council

Seventy-ninth year

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Monday, 15 April 2024, 3 p.m.
New York

Provisional

President: Mrs. Frazier (Malta)

Members:

Algeria	Mr. Koudri
China	Mr. Geng Shuang
Ecuador	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
France	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
Guyana	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
Japan	Mr. Yamazaki
Mozambique	Mr. Fernandes
Republic of Korea	Mr. Sangjin Kim
Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
Sierra Leone	Mr. Sowa
Slovenia	Mr. Žbogar
Switzerland	Mrs. Baeriswyl
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
United States of America	Mr. Wood

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Latvia, Poland and Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I also invite His Excellency Mr. Stavros Lambrinidis, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Grossi.

Mr. Grossi: It is a pleasure to see you, Madam President, and other colleagues here again. I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to update the Security Council on the activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) concerning nuclear safety, security and safeguards in Ukraine. I also thank the Council for its continuing support of the IAEA's efforts.

It has been more than two years since the war began, the first-ever war to be fought amid the facilities of a major nuclear power programme. The IAEA has been monitoring the situation closely and assisting Ukraine every day since the start of the war. IAEA staff are continuously present, monitoring the situation at all five of Ukraine's nuclear power plants, including at Zaporizhzhya, which remains under Russian operational control.

Today my statement will focus on the recent grave violations of the five concrete principles that I first established in this very Chamber on 30 May 2023 (see S/PV.9334). Those five concrete principles are there to prevent a nuclear accident and to maintain the integrity of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Let me remind the Council what they are. First, there should be no attack of any kind, from or against the plant, in

particular targeting the reactors, spent fuel storage, other critical infrastructure or personnel. Secondly, the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant should not be used as storage or a base for heavy weapons — for example, multiple-rocket launchers, artillery systems and munitions and tanks — or military personnel that could be used for an attack from the plant. Thirdly, off-site power to the plant should not be put at risk. To that effect, all efforts should be made to ensure that off-site power remains available and secure at all times. Fourthly, all structures, systems and components essential to the safe and secure operation of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant should be protected from attacks or acts of sabotage. Fifthly, no action should be taken that undermines those principles.

On 30 May 2023, I said here that observing those principles was essential to avoiding the danger of a catastrophic nuclear incident and that I had respectfully and solemnly asked both sides to commit to them. At our meeting last May, the members of the Security Council and Ukraine clearly supported those principles. Nevertheless, over the past 10 days, the first of those principles has been violated repeatedly in what marks a step-change increase in risk to nuclear safety and security at the plant. On Sunday 7 April, the international support and assistance mission to the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant confirmed the first attacks since November 2022 to directly target the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. The mission team was able to inspect the location of one direct strike at the apex of the containment dome of the Unit 6 reactor building. While the damage to the structure was superficial, the attack sets a very dangerous precedent for successful targeting of the reactor containment. The other two attacks were close to the main reactor and resulted in at least one casualty. Agency experts at the site have been informed by the plant of a drone attack on the site's oxygen and nitrogen production facility, two attacks on the training centre located just outside the site perimeter and a drone reportedly being shot down above the turbine hall of Unit 6. These reckless attacks must cease immediately. Although they have fortunately not led to a radiological incident this time, they significantly increase the risk at the power plant, where nuclear safety is already compromised. I am concerned not only about the attacks themselves but about the context in which they occurred. For several months before those direct attacks, there had already been an increase in isolated drone incursions in the vicinity of the facility and in the nearby town of

Enerhodar. In other areas of nuclear safety degradation, the plant is currently relying on just two lines of external power. There have been at least four occasions in the past year when the plant has had only one line of external power supply, with the precarity lasting for periods of as much as four months.

Let me put it plainly. Two years of war are weighing heavily on nuclear safety at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. All of the IAEA's seven pillars of nuclear safety and security have been compromised. We cannot sit by and watch as the final weight tips the finely balanced scale. Even though the plant's six reactors are now in cold shutdown, with the final unit having shifted into that status two days ago following the IAEA's recommendation, the potential danger of a major nuclear accident remains very real. The Agency will continue to closely follow the operational status of the plant and provide technically viable alternatives in a context of rapid changes and challenges. Our work at the facility remains essential. That has been recognized by all, irrespective of the side they are on in the conflict. But to be effective, the IAEA teams need timely access to assess the condition of the plant and evaluate the cumulative impact that more than 26 months in a war zone have had on nuclear safety.

We are getting dangerously close to a nuclear accident. We must not allow complacency to let a roll of the dice decide what happens tomorrow. We must do everything in our power today to minimize the risk of an accident. The five principles established in this very Chamber one year ago must be followed. They are there to prevent a major nuclear accident with potentially significant radiological consequences. The most recent attacks represent a flagrant violation of those crucial principles, and they must stop. I am asking the Council for its steadfast support for the five principles and the IAEA's seven pillars of nuclear safety and security, which those principles help to underpin. And I am asking for members' continued support of the IAEA's role in monitoring the situation in the service of the international community. Despite huge challenges, the IAEA has kept open the indispensable lines of communication and will continue to do so. The support of members' nations and the Council as a whole is essential.

I thank the Council for inviting me today in a demonstration of its continuing commitment to this critical issue. The IAEA and I remain at members' disposal to assist it in its mission to preserve international peace and security.

The President: I thank Mr. Grossi for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): I would like to thank Director General Grossi for his briefing today and for his update on the situation.

We find ourselves in dangerous and uncharted territory. On Sunday, 7 April, for the first time in history, the reactor building of a commissioned nuclear power plant was hit. There was no time to pause, because another drone then hit the ground in the vicinity of the power plant perimeter last Tuesday. We cannot afford to understate how dangerous the situation at Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant has become. The seven indispensable pillars for nuclear security and safety and especially the five basic principles for the protection of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant must be respected, as the Director General confirmed today. At the same time, the incident also highlighted the persistent risks to the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and other nuclear facilities in Ukraine during this war of aggression. As Mr. Grossi pointed out, we are in dire need of military restraint. This is playing with fire, and as we know, playing with fire is inadvisable, while playing with nuclear fuel rods is even less so.

We appreciate the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in keeping the international community abreast of the developments around the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and Ukrainian civilian nuclear infrastructure in general. The presence of IAEA staff at all of Ukraine's nuclear power plants represents a vital stabilizing factor in a very perilous situation. We note with concern that the IAEA team at the Zaporizhzhya plant was denied access to some of the relevant sites and was not able to assess the full impact of the damage. We call on Russia to immediately grant on-site access to the IAEA experts. At the same time, and this cannot be emphasized enough, we would not be dealing with this situation if Russia had not launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine and illegally occupied the nuclear power plant. We call on Russia to immediately return control of the plant to of its rightful owner.

We believe that neither side would wish to launch a deliberate direct attack on a commissioned nuclear reactor. Nevertheless, the unpredictability of the war has brought us to the brink of a disaster that would be devastating for the whole region and have global effects.

Slovenia has been warning about the looming dangers since Russia first attacked and subsequently occupied the plant in March 2022. We say that as a country with a civil nuclear programme and our own nuclear power plant. We are fully aware from first-hand experience of the importance of ensuring and maintaining nuclear security and safety.

The situation in Ukraine, including at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, represents a threat to international peace and security. The Security Council should reflect on ways to ensure compliance with the seven pillars and five basic principles, and we stand ready to engage.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I thank Director General Grossi for his briefing. The United States appreciates his focus and leadership in helping to prevent a nuclear catastrophe in Ukraine, particularly at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. We are also grateful for the work of the courageous staff of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), who are braving hostile working conditions to support nuclear safety and security and implement safeguards at Ukraine's nuclear facilities.

Consistent with the IAEA's five concrete principles for nuclear safety, the United States underscores the vital necessity of avoiding any actions that would put the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant's safety and security at risk. Every member of the Security Council should agree on a fundamental point, which is that it is imperative that we avoid a nuclear incident at the plant. An incident could have a catastrophic impact both on Ukraine and the surrounding regions. However, Russia's war and continued control of the plant pose an extraordinary risk of a nuclear incident. Let us be clear. That risk is a direct result of Putin's decision to continue waging an illegal, unjustifiable and unprovoked war on Ukraine. But the reality is that Russia does not care about those risks. If it did, it would not continue to forcibly control the plant, despite numerous calls from Council members and the IAEA Board of Governors for Russia to immediately withdraw its personnel in order for the competent Ukrainian authorities to regain full control. Across the many public statements given by the Director General since Russia's full-scale invasion, one plea has remained constant: the need for a reliable power supply for the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant.

However, Russia's targeted attacks against Ukraine's critical infrastructure directly threaten the stability of external power to the site, posing an unacceptable

nuclear safety risk at the site as a direct result of Russia's actions. That directly undermines the IAEA's seven pillars of nuclear safety and security, which highlight the need for a secure off-site power supply from the grid for all nuclear sites.

We remain concerned that the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant is being operated by an insufficient cadre of improperly trained, unlicensed operators. That is a dangerous and unsustainable posture for the safe maintenance and operation of a nuclear power plant. Russia's 1 February announcement that Ukrainians who have not signed employment contracts with Rosatom and accepted Russian citizenship are banned from entering the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant makes the staffing situation even more dire. Russia's blatant disregard for the need to retain licensed and experienced staff calls into question its and Rosatom's commitment to the safe and secure operation of nuclear power plants globally.

We continue to underscore the persistent and essential imperative of avoiding any military action that leads to a safety incident at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. We express our full support for the IAEA's seven indispensable pillars of nuclear safety and security, as well as the five concrete principles, to prevent a nuclear accident at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. In spite of Russia's claims of cooperation with the IAEA, Russia is now trying to use the latest incident — of which Russia is the root cause — to claim it must scale back IAEA access.

Since March 2022, when Russia illegally seized the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, the international community has held its breath each of the eight times the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant has lost external power from Russia's attacks on the Ukrainian power grid, or when Russian forces have detained essential staff, or when shelling has struck perilously close.

We reiterate the international community's call for Russia to immediately withdraw its troops and personnel from within Ukraine's internationally recognized borders and return full control of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant to the competent Ukrainian authorities as the rightful owner.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): I thank you, President, and I thank Director General Grossi for his briefing.

The Director General's 7 April report of drone strikes hitting the Zaporizhzhya site was deeply concerning, as were reports from the International Atomic Energy

Agency (IAEA) team at the plant of explosions and rifle fire at the site and several rounds of outgoing artillery fire from nearby the plant. Thankfully, the IAEA has since confirmed that its team on the ground were unharmed, and there were no indications of damage to critical nuclear safety and security systems at the site. We thank the IAEA team for all their efforts in monitoring the safety and security situation at the plant in extremely difficult circumstances.

That is, however, a stark reminder of the precarious safety and security situation at Europe's largest nuclear power plant, caused by Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine. There have been eight complete losses of power at Zaporizhzhya since August 2022. IAEA experts have not had complete access to all areas important for nuclear safety and security. Russia continues to keep military equipment and personnel at the site, including vehicles in the turbine halls and defensive installations on the reactor roofs.

Other sites have also been affected. The Neutron Source installation in Kharkiv lost power twice in April and March owing to shelling. The south Ukraine nuclear power plant also lost its connection to power lines. The IAEA team at the Khmelnytskyi nuclear power plant was forced to take shelter four times in March owing to air raids, putting the operating staff there under immense pressure.

It is vital to reduce the risk of a nuclear incident at Zaporizhzhya and across Ukraine. The United Kingdom echoes Director General Grossi's appeal to abstain from any action that could violate the five concrete principles for upholding safety at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant that he set out to the Council last May (see S/PV.9334). We also call on Russia to allow the IAEA experts full and complete access to all areas of the plant.

One country, however, has a far greater ability to improve the nuclear safety and security situation in Ukraine than any other: Russia can hand back Zaporizhzhya to the Ukrainian authorities, end its war and remove all its troops from Ukraine's sovereign territory.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Director General Grossi for his briefing.

The prolonged crisis in Ukraine poses a serious challenge and a grave threat to the safety and security of Ukrainian nuclear facilities. Recently, multiple drone

attacks on the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and repeated shelling in its surrounding area point to a situation that is deeply worrisome.

The impacts of a nuclear accident transcend national borders, and nuclear risks warrant a high level of vigilance. Last May, Director General Grossi proposed five principles on the safety and security of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant (see S/PV.9334), and he has been actively using his good offices to promote the safety and security of nuclear facilities. China appreciates all his efforts. We support the continued constructive role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in enhancing the safety and security of Ukraine's nuclear facilities.

China has also made financial donations to Ukraine's nuclear safety and security technical assistance programme. China once again calls on the parties concerned to exercise calm and restraint, adhere to the spirit of humanity, science, communication and cooperation, strictly comply with the Convention on Nuclear Safety and other relevant elements of international law, strictly observe the bottom line of nuclear safety, refrain from any action that could endanger nuclear facilities, and work resolutely to prevent man-made nuclear accidents.

The issue of Zaporizhzhya's nuclear safety and security is one aspect of the Ukraine crisis, the ultimate resolution of which depends on the prospects for a political settlement. We call on all parties to uphold the principle of indivisible security, focus on the overarching goal of achieving peace and stability, start engaging with each other without delay, gradually build consensus and resume peace talks at an early date, so as to create conditions conducive to the proper resolution of the relevant issues, including the safety and security of nuclear facilities. China will remain committed to promoting peace and dialogue and will play a constructive role in promoting a political settlement of the crisis in Ukraine.

Mr. Yamazaki (Japan): Allow me to begin my statement by expressing our sincere appreciation to Director General Grossi for his briefing on the most recent developments on the ground.

Japan remains deeply concerned about the nuclear safety and security situation in Ukraine, in particular at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. We see, in the Director General's recent statements, that drone attacks on Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant

have added to growing alarm about the already highly precarious nuclear safety and security situation there. Those actions also represent a clear violation of the five concrete principles, as the Director General stated today in the Chamber. All parties must ensure that Europe's largest nuclear power plant does not pose a risk of nuclear disaster. Otherwise, consequences will befall not only Europe, but the entire world.

We reiterate the essential role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Support and Assistance Mission to Zaporizhzhya — with regard to the site. Unlimited and prompt information, as well as unrestricted and timely access, should be provided to the Mission so that the IAEA can carry out its assessment.

Japan firmly supports the IAEA's continued dedication in Ukraine and its efforts to help decrease the risk of a nuclear accident and keep the situation under control. The Agency's presence on the ground is essential in making impartial, objective and first-hand observations.

Needless to say, Russia's aggression against Ukraine, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations, and Russia's illegal and unlawful seizure of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant are the original sources of these problems and risks. We urge Russia's immediate and unconditional withdrawal from the entire internationally recognized territory of Ukraine, including the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. The plant should be immediately returned to the full control of the Ukrainian authorities.

Japan renews its firm commitment to continue to support Director General Grossi and the Agency staff's efforts in a manner that respects Ukraine's sovereignty.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): As the Council heard just now, on 30 May, under the Swiss presidency of the Council, Director General Rafael Grossi, whom I thank for his great commitment and for his briefing today, presented five concrete and practical principles for preventing an accident at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Compliance with those principles is in everyone's interest, as the consequences of a nuclear accident would have a widespread impact.

Those principles ensure the seven pillars of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which were urgently established following Russia's military

seizure and illegal occupation of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant in 2022. Since then, the facility's safety and security have been seriously compromised.

Despite the precariousness of the situation, we were relieved to know that there were no indications that any of the five principles had been directly violated — that is, until last week. With the serious incidents of 7 April and the days that followed, namely, a series of drone attacks directly impacting the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, that has suddenly changed. For the first time since the five principles were established, the building housing one of the reactors was targeted by military action, in flagrant violation of those principles. These actions are irresponsible and unacceptable.

Switzerland therefore wholeheartedly endorses the Director General's call for de-escalation so that the latest developments “do not mark the beginning of a new and gravely dangerous front of the war”.

We call on Russia and Ukraine to fully implement and respect the seven pillars and five principles at all times and to refrain from hostilities near and against nuclear facilities. We reiterate our call on the parties to the conflict to respect international humanitarian law in all circumstances. In particular, we emphasize the special protection afforded by article 56 of the Protocol I Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 against attacks on installations containing dangerous forces. The article requires that no military objectives be placed in the vicinity of such installations.

Since the start of Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, Switzerland has been deeply concerned about the safety and security of the nuclear facilities in the country. For the protection of the civilian population and the environment in Ukraine and beyond, a nuclear incident must be avoided at all costs. The fact that all six reactors of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant are now in cold shutdown, as recommended by the IAEA, represents a positive development in a fragile situation. Switzerland reiterates its call on Russia to immediately withdraw all its troops and weapons from the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and the entire territory of Ukraine. Control of the nuclear power plant must be returned to the relevant Ukrainian authorities.

We also reiterate our appreciation and support for the impartial work of the IAEA and its efforts to reduce the risk of a nuclear accident. The continued presence of Agency experts at all Ukrainian nuclear sites is essential to provide impartial and independent information and to

guarantee nuclear safety and security. We reiterate our call for prompt access by IAEA experts to all relevant areas of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. We also call for an immediate improvement in staff working and living conditions and for an end to discriminatory administrative practices in staffing.

As a Council, we must be clear and united on the central objective of nuclear safety and security and continue to monitor that issue very closely. We also hope that this common goal can contribute to efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Koudri (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his briefing and for his tireless efforts, and those of his team, to ensure the safety and security of the nuclear facilities in Ukraine.

Recent IAEA reports highlight the alarming escalation of threats to nuclear safety and security posed by the crisis in Ukraine. Drone attacks on the Zaporizhzhya plant, its disconnection from the national grid and frequent disruptions of the plant's external power line are very worrisome developments that increase the risk of a nuclear accident and make the system less safe.

Algeria urges all parties concerned to collaborate with IAEA experts to establish strict safety protocols at all nuclear power plants and to strictly abide by the relevant rules of international law. It is important to avoid any action that could endanger nuclear facilities and cause accidents. We support any IAEA proposal to prevent an accident that could lead to a nuclear disaster, because such a catastrophic scenario would have devastating consequences for the international community as a whole. While we commend the constructive role played by the IAEA in promoting the safe and secure use of nuclear technology worldwide, we believe that cooperation and open communication among Member States and the IAEA are crucial in that regard.

However, nuclear safety and security in Ukraine cannot be discussed in isolation from the crisis, in general. Despite divergent views on the conflict, there is consensus on the need to prevent a nuclear disaster. We therefore call on all parties to avoid a nuclear catastrophe until a complete cessation of hostilities can be achieved.

Ultimately, this crisis can be resolved only through a just and lasting peace that addresses legitimate security concerns of all parties, on the basis of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We urge all parties to focus on creating an environment conducive to the resumption of dialogue.

In conclusion, Algeria reiterates its call for a joint global effort to strengthen nuclear safety and security in Ukraine and the world while taking into account the IAEA recommendations. It is also important to support talks aimed at establishing a zone of protection for nuclear safety and security and to cease hostilities by activating diplomatic channels and promoting peaceful coexistence as a common goal.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Today, in this Chamber, a set of paratroopers from European Union countries have parachuted into this meeting so that they can parade in front of the cameras and be shown on their national news programmes in their respective countries. I ask again, what is the added value of the statements of the representatives of those States in this Chamber? We have a representative of the European Union here. Beyond what he says, how can those representatives add to our discussion? I do not see them rushing to take part in meetings that are held at our request. I said this previously, and I will repeat it now. If those representatives are so bold as to attend these meetings, then I ask them to attend the meetings we request as well. We will also listen to them speak at those meetings about the role they are playing in the crisis in Ukraine today.

We would like to express our gratitude to our American and Slovenian colleagues for their timely initiative in requesting today's meeting. They beat us to it, as we were also ready to request a meeting because of the threats posed by Ukraine to the safety and security of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant.

We listened carefully to the briefing today. Regardless of who provided today's assessment of the possible catastrophic consequences of Kyiv's irresponsible and reckless actions with regard to the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, we fully concur with the assessment. That person clearly demonstrated the level of the threats to the nuclear safety and security of the plant posed by those attacks.

Council members may be surprised by the unusual way in which we addressed the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency

(IAEA), Mr. Rafael Grossi, which is unusual for the Security Council and even unusual for normal human communication. We urge Council members not to interpret that as a lack of respect, for we have always valued Director General Grossi's work and the tireless efforts he and his IAEA colleagues have made. In particular, we are grateful to the Agency's leadership for swiftly and clearly condemning the direct attacks on the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and calling to put an end to provocations at the plant. However, we decided to begin our statement in that way to demonstrate how strange the Director General's assessments, which are generally balanced and relevant, sound when they contain anonymized phrases such as "whoever might be behind the attacks", despite the obvious facts. The IAEA's report does not indicate which side is behind the attacks on the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, although we know full well who it is, especially given that the IAEA experts at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant are witnessing everything first-hand.

The maintenance of nuclear safety and security has always been an unconditional priority for the Russian Federation. Our country, with the support of the IAEA's leadership, is making every effort to prevent threats to the safety and security of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Whether someone likes the fact that the plant is under Russian control or not is another matter and is irrelevant to the nuclear safety and security of the plant. The sole source of the threats is clear. With the connivance of its Western sponsors, Ukraine is systematically conducting irresponsible and reckless attacks on the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and the surrounding territory. Between July and November 2022, the Ukrainian armed forces regularly conducted artillery missile strikes on the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, and there were also several attempts to commit subversive acts. After that, over the next 18 months, no direct strikes against the site were reported, as the Ukrainian armed forces focused on shelling the city of Enerhodar, home to Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant staff and their families, as well as the industrial area around the plant and the plant-related infrastructure beyond its perimeter. Over the past few months, however, such attacks have not only resumed, but also significantly intensified. The Russian armed forces have detected and downed up to 100 unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) per week. Our country has regularly reported and continues to report those unacceptable actions to the Security Council and the IAEA secretariat.

However, our Western colleagues did not want to recognize that the threats posed by Kyiv are real, and neither do they want to now, even after such egregious incidents as what happened on 12 March when a UAV-delivered projectile exploded just five metres from the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant's diesel fuel storage facility and what happened on 5 April when kamikaze drones hit the cargo port and the oxygen and nitrogen production facility.

Without the mentors of the Kyiv regime reining it in, on 7 April, Kyiv began to believe in its own impunity and resumed its tactics of directly shelling the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. First, a kamikaze drone struck the canteen, where food was being unloaded from a truck. Three people were injured — one of them seriously so. Moreover, just 20 minutes before the strike, IAEA experts visited the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, in accordance with the previously agreed schedule, which means that they could have become the targets of Kyiv's attack. After that, drone attacks were launched against Units 5 and 6. One of the drones was shot down, and the other exploded on the roof of Unit 6. Later the same day, a training centre at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant was attacked, and another strike on its roof was recorded on 9 April. On 8 April, on the territory of the plant, a UAV was shot down and fell on the roof of the turbine hall of Unit 5.

I have provided a detailed timeline to make it clear to all our colleagues that those were not some random strikes against the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. We are talking about direct, targeted strikes by the Ukrainian armed forces against the largest nuclear power plant in Europe — the blame for which Kyiv's leader is cynically trying to shift to Russia. We will probably hear more of that today. Those who are playing along with Kyiv should ask the simple question: why is it that, out of the five nuclear power plants in Ukraine, Russia is endangering the only one under its control? With the slightest bit of logic, the absurdity of such accusations becomes obvious. And yet, our Western colleagues themselves, without realizing it, spoke today using ultimatums — "Hand over control of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, and then we will stop shelling it". In doing so, they not only exposed Kyiv's game, but basically admitted to participating in those irresponsible strikes. In fact today, when briefing us, the IAEA Director General did not say a word about access by IAEA personnel to the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. That was something raised by the United

States and the United Kingdom, which means they had prepared it in their statements in advance. Why then are we even inviting Director General Grossi to brief us?

There are no military goals whatsoever that could justify Ukrainian attacks on the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Russia has never deployed heavy weapons at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, nor has it carried out any attacks from its territory. IAEA experts at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant were invited there by the Russians and are well aware of that. Ukraine's actions constitute a flagrant, direct violation of the Agency's calls and demands. That comes as no surprise, as we know all about Kyiv's disregard for the IAEA's efforts, especially given that Kyiv does not even care about the safety of the Agency's staff.

In view of all of this, we call on the IAEA leadership to recognize an obvious fact, and rather than continuing to engage in a verbal balancing act, to point to the source of the attacks on the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. This is not a political issue. Right now it is simply a question of the safety and security of the plant and the nuclear and radiation safety of Europe. The fact that the Agency's secretariat is hesitant to call a spade a spade only encourages Kyiv to continue its irresponsible and extremely dangerous actions. If the Agency persists with this unattributable interpretation of the shelling of the plant, its efforts will lose much of their meaning.

In that respect, we have far lower hopes for Western Governments, which long ago gave the Kyiv regime carte blanche to commit any crimes or acts against Russia. Nonetheless, we would like to believe that our European neighbours have not completely lost their instinct for self-preservation and will not put the lives and health of their own citizens at risk. If Ukraine's strikes on the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant continue, no one can completely rule out a nuclear disaster of regional or even global proportions. We would like to believe that the European public is cognizant of the danger of such a scenario and that it will not let its own safety be sacrificed to the insane plots of the Zelenskyy regime.

For its part, the Russian Federation will continue to protect the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant from Ukraine's attacks and provocations. We intend to continue to take measures to strengthen the nuclear safety and security of the plant in accordance with our national legislation and obligations arising from

the relevant international legal instruments to which the Russian Federation is party. We also call on the IAEA secretariat and all reasonable members of the international community to do all they can to save the world from a nuclear incident. One of the most important steps towards that goal would be a direct and open condemnation of Ukraine's actions, which have already repeatedly brought us all to the brink of catastrophe.

Mr. Montalvo Sosa (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank Director General Grossi for his briefing and express my appreciation to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) team operating at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and at other nuclear power plants in Ukraine. Their sacrifice and dedication to keeping those facilities running is commendable. I therefore reaffirm the importance of preserving their integrity and guaranteeing their access to health services, including mental health services.

As we have heard, the situation at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant in Ukraine is unprecedented. The IAEA's reports confirm the persistent nuclear security risks arising from the ongoing conflict. The pattern of attacks and military activities in the area is compromising the security of Europe's largest nuclear power plant and contravening the nuclear protection principles established by the Agency. A nuclear accident at the plant could trigger catastrophic consequences for the region, the global environment and human health and safety.

I agree with the Director General that attacking a nuclear power plant is unacceptable in every sense. Ecuador therefore urges the parties to exercise restraint and maximum moderation, avoiding actions that compromise the structural and operational integrity of the Zaporizhzhya plant. Compliance with the seven pillars of nuclear safety and security and the five fundamental principles is essential if we are to guarantee safety at the plant. Mr. Grossi can count on Ecuador's support for his actions undertaken to that end and for his leadership in guiding the collective efforts to resolve this crisis. It is crucial that IAEA inspectors have unrestricted and timely access to all relevant areas in order to maintain an independent and accurate assessment of the nuclear security situation.

In conclusion, I reaffirm my belief that the Council must do everything in its power to prevent the war from spilling over into the nuclear domain, which would have

incalculable dimensions and consequences. I therefore call on the parties to comply with the IAEA Statute, the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian law.

Mr. Fernandes (Mozambique): We thank Mr. Rafael Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his valuable insights.

We understand that today's meeting underscores the need for sustained vigilance and proactive measures to mitigate the risks associated with nuclear accidents, in line with the principles outlined by the IAEA. It is in that context that we are deeply concerned about the reports of direct military attacks on the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, Europe's largest nuclear facility. The incidents mark a dangerous escalation and are undermining the safety and security of the plant, putting the entire region at risk of a potential nuclear catastrophe.

Mozambique has consistently warned about the grave dangers of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine spilling over into the nuclear domain. The lessons of history, such as the Chernobyl disaster, have shown us the devastating and long-lasting consequences of nuclear accidents. We cannot allow such a tragedy to occur again. We call on the warring parties to immediately halt any attacks on the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and to respect the seven indispensable pillars prescribed by the IAEA for nuclear safety and security during armed conflicts. Failure to do so would be an unforgivable breach of international norms and standards.

According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, this marks the first direct targeting of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant with military action since November 2022, and it constitutes a blatant breach of the five principles established to safeguard such facilities. We concur with Mr. Grossi that it is imperative to stop such incidents from recurring and thereby opening an extremely dangerous front in the conflict. We fully endorse the five principles outlined by the International Atomic Energy Agency for ensuring the protection of nuclear facilities in armed conflicts, and they must be strictly upheld by all parties to this conflict.

The attacks on the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant are inexcusable and reckless and must cease immediately if we are to avoid a major nuclear accident, which could be disastrous. Mozambique reiterates its unwavering support for a political and negotiated

resolution to this conflict. Only through direct dialogue and diplomacy can we establish a foundation for lasting peace and security in the region. We urge the international community to redouble its efforts to facilitate such negotiations and to work tirelessly to prevent the unthinkable — a nuclear accident that would have catastrophic consequences for humankind.

In conclusion, the stakes could not be higher. We must act with urgency and unity to protect the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and avoid a nuclear disaster. The future of the planet depends on us.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for his briefing.

When we last met in January to discuss the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant (see S/PV.9526), we noted that the situation there was precarious and worrisome. Maintenance operations and the power and water supplies to the plant were subject to unacceptable risks. Those concerns persist today, and the events of the past week have compounded our concerns.

On 7 and 9 April, the plant was targeted by attacks for the first time since November 2022, and one of those attacks even hit and damaged the dome of reactor 6. We take note of the statement by the Director General of the Agency that the strike did not jeopardize the security of the plant. However, we cannot say that we are relieved. This is indeed a serious incident, which serves as a reminder of the untenable nature of the current situation and the serious risks that arise from Russia's continued illegal occupation of the site. These attacks must stop. They are a clear violation of the seven pillars defined by the Agency and the five concrete principles that the Director General set out before the Security Council in May 2023 to preserve the safety and security of the site (see S/PV.9334). In particular, those principles affirm that no attack of any kind should be carried out against or from the plant.

In that regard, we can only emphasize Russia's responsibility for this situation. Russia has initiated a large-scale aggression against Ukraine in violation of the Charter of the United Nations. It illegally seized the plant in February 2022 and has since used it as a military base. It has placed mines near the plant. It has positioned troops and military equipment there, as reported by the Agency. Russia must end that militarization of the plant, which exposes us to the danger of a major nuclear accident at Europe's largest nuclear power plant, with

serious human and environmental consequences. We also call once again on Russia to comply with the resolutions of the IAEA Board of Governors and to end its occupation of the plant and return full control to the Ukrainian authorities. In view of the significant and very worrisome deterioration of the situation, France also reiterates its call for the security of the reactors to be preserved as much as possible, including by keeping them shut down for as long as the situation requires.

We reaffirm our support for the Agency, the role of which is crucial. Its teams are carrying out essential work to ensure compliance with the five concrete principles on the ground while respecting Ukrainian sovereignty. We are very concerned that their safety was directly jeopardized by the attacks of 7 and 9 April. They must be able to carry out their mandate without hindrance, to communicate freely with Ukrainian staff at the plant and to access all areas of the plant.

France will continue to work alongside the Agency to preserve the safety and security of Ukraine's nuclear facilities.

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett (Guyana): I thank Director General Grossi for the update provided. We share his grave concern about the recent drone attacks on Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and their impact on worsening the nuclear safety and security situation at the site.

Guyana deplores such attacks in an already highly precarious nuclear safety and security environment and calls for the parties to the conflict to eliminate such plans from their military strategies. We note that this is reportedly not the first time that the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant has been shelled since the start of the conflict in 2022, but that it might be the first time that the plant was directly targeted by military action. We underscore the risk of severe harm that would result from attacking a nuclear power plant. There can be no military or other advantage gained from such irresponsible action. While we are pleased to hear that the attacks have not compromised nuclear safety in any serious way, we believe that that was more by accident — or perhaps sheer luck — than by design. Any attack on a nuclear power plant means endangering nuclear safety and countless lives.

Moreover, such actions are clear violations of the five concrete principles to prevent a nuclear accident at the plant and the seven indispensable pillars of nuclear safety and security. In that regard, we echo Director

General Grossi's strong appeal for the military decision makers to cease all violations of those principles and to ensure the integrity of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and all other nuclear power plants in Ukraine. We also call for such violations not to be repeated in any other conflict setting and for Member States to exercise maximum restraint. Moreover, we call for enhanced cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to mitigate against the threats posed to nuclear safety and security and appreciate the important role that the Agency continues to play in that regard.

We appeal to the Russian Federation to cooperate with the IAEA and to protect the integrity of all nuclear power plants under its control in Ukraine. We also call on the Russian Federation to completely withdraw its military forces from Ukraine and put an end to this devastating war.

Mr. Sangjin Kim (Republic of Korea): I also thank Director General Grossi for his timely briefing. The Republic of Korea commends the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for its ongoing endeavours to ensure nuclear safety and security in Ukraine since the beginning of the war.

At the outset, my delegation deeply regrets Russia's intense and systematic strikes against Ukrainian energy infrastructure over the past weeks, as the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs reported to the Security Council last Thursday (see S/PV.9600). We were speechless to hear that more than two dozen energy facilities across Ukraine had been damaged or destroyed by the coordinated large-scale attacks since March, disrupting access to electricity for millions of Ukrainians.

At the same time, the international community faces another level of threats, as hostilities directly targeted the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant several times last week. Those attacks include a drone attack inflicting physical damage on one of the site's six reactor buildings. We note with great concern the Director General's assessment that such attacks clearly violated the five concrete principles for protecting the facility established by the Director General. The Republic of Korea, operating 26 nuclear reactors on its soil, is acutely aware of the importance of ensuring nuclear safety and security.

During the most recent Security Council meeting on the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, held in January (see S/PV.9536), my delegation underlined

the perilous situation caused by multiple challenges unfolding simultaneously, including occurrences of complete outages of off-site power, dwindling supplies of cooling water, reduced numbers of operating and maintenance staff and landmines in the vicinity of the plant. Now, as the plant has been directly targeted by military action for the first time since November 2022, we have crossed another chilling threshold approaching potential nuclear disaster. Placing the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant — Europe's largest nuclear power plant — in an active war zone and taking nuclear safety in the region hostage must cease immediately.

As the origin of the current precarious situation at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant is Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. It is Russia that must ultimately correct the situation by returning control of the facility to the competent Ukrainian authorities. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the adoption of the IAEA Board of Governors' resolution last month, reaffirming its commitment to ensuring nuclear safety and security in full respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

The occupation of nuclear power plants by foreign forces had never happened prior to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This extraordinary situation calls for renewed norms and principles for nuclear safety and security. In that regard, my delegation lends its full support to the Director General's seven indispensable pillars and five concrete principles. Furthermore, we commend the tireless efforts of the IAEA Support and Assistance Mission to ensure nuclear safety and security at the five sites throughout Ukraine, including the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. At this critical juncture, it is imperative to guarantee complete and unfettered access to the entire facility of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and to fully support the IAEA experts' activities for monitoring and early warnings.

In conclusion, my delegation echoes the Director General's appeal to military decision makers to abstain from any action that violates the basic principles that protect nuclear facilities.

Mr. Sowa (Sierra Leone): I thank you for convening this meeting, Madam President, and Director General Grossi for his very important briefing.

In Sierra Leone's statement to the Council on this agenda item on 22 January (see S/PV.9533), we made the important point that one of the main areas

of focus in the Ukraine conflict should be avoiding a nuclear catastrophe. We therefore acknowledge the critical importance of this briefing, focused on the drone attacks reported on 7 April on the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant in the city of Enerhodar in Ukraine, because they pose a serious threat to international peace and security. We are seriously concerned about attacks around any nuclear power plants anywhere in Ukraine, including those reported on 7 April in Zaporizhzhya. We call for a thorough and impartial investigation into the incidents at the plant with the full cooperation of all parties involved. It is imperative to establish the facts surrounding those incidents if we are to prevent any such occurrences in future.

Sierra Leone calls on all stakeholders to exercise maximum restraint and engage in constructive dialogue to de-escalate tensions and prevent further incidents that could jeopardize the safety of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, its personnel or the surrounding environment. We urge the parties to prioritize safety and the required protections in accordance with international standards and principles. Sierra Leone calls on all Council members to support efforts aimed at ensuring the protection of nuclear facilities in Ukraine. In that regard, we underscore the importance of upholding the seven pillars outlined by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to ensure nuclear safety and security in armed conflicts, which include physical integrity and reliable external power sources. We further call on all the parties to the conflict to adhere to the five principles outlined by the Director General of the IAEA.

We note that five of the plant's six nuclear reactors have been in cold shutdown since September 2022, and a significant amount of radioactive material remains at the facility. Those fragile and dangerous conditions pose a significant risk to nuclear safety and security, which could have far-reaching consequences for the region and beyond if the plant is attacked. The potential consequences of any conflict near a nuclear power plant are grave and must be avoided at all costs. The recent developments therefore underscore the urgent need for concerted international efforts to mitigate those risks and ensure the protection of vital nuclear infrastructure. Sierra Leone supports the IAEA's efforts to assess and mitigate the risks at the Zaporizhzhya plant and encourages continued international cooperation in addressing the challenges at hand. In that regard, it is

imperative that all the parties involved demonstrate the greatest possible caution and responsibility in safeguarding the plant and its surrounding areas.

We underscore the crucial role of the IAEA in addressing nuclear safety and security challenges and commend Director General Grossi and his team for their unwavering commitment to their mandate and work. We urge all parties to cooperate fully with the IAEA to prevent any further escalation of risks at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. In addition, in the light of the recent incidents at the plant, it is essential for the Council to maintain a united stance on the imperative of upholding nuclear safety and security standards.

In conclusion, Sierra Leone stands ready to engage constructively with all stakeholders to address the challenges facing the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and to support any initiatives aimed at upholding the principles of nuclear safety and security and promoting stability, transparency and cooperation in addressing this critical issue for the benefit of all.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Malta.

I would like to start by thanking Mr. Grossi for his informative briefing. Malta is deeply concerned about the recent drone strikes against the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. They represent an unprecedented escalation and the first direct military action against the plant since November 2022. We can never allow military strikes against nuclear facilities, let alone the largest nuclear power plant in Europe. The situation around the Zaporizhzhya plant has been precarious for more than two years. That is an unacceptable threat to nuclear safety and security with potentially catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences for Ukraine, its neighbours and beyond. While the Agency reported no structural damage to essential systems and components, the incident had the potential to undermine the integrity of the reactor's containment system, dramatically increasing the risk to nuclear safety. The military actions have put the lives of operational staff and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) personnel in grave danger, which must be avoided at all costs.

Malta reaffirms its full support for the IAEA's five concrete principles to ensure nuclear safety and security at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, as well as the seven pillars for ensuring nuclear safety and

security during an armed conflict. They represent an indispensable framework for our collective security and must be respected. Our position has remained consistent. We support the Agency's presence at all nuclear facilities in Ukraine, including the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, whose staff should be granted full access to all areas of the plant. We commend the IAEA's continued efforts to find a permanent solution for the safety and integrity of the plant, including through the courageous and invaluable work of its Support and Assistance Mission to Zaporizhzhya.

We should also note that we would not be discussing the issue had the Russian Federation not invaded Ukraine and illegally seized the plant. The Russian Federation's militarization of the largest nuclear power plant in Europe is deplorable, and full control of the plant should be returned to the legitimate Ukrainian authorities. In that connection, we want to point to the resolutions of the IAEA Board of Governors of 3 March, 15 September and 17 November 2022, which called on the Russian Federation to immediately withdraw its military and other personnel from the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. We further welcome the Agency's clear position of compliance with the General Assembly's resolution ES-11/4, which reaffirmed the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and condemned the attempted illegal annexation of its four regions.

In conclusion, the IAEA is the international body entrusted with the promotion of nuclear safety and security, and we should all adhere to its positions and respect its work. We call on the Russian Federation to do the same.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): I thank you, Madam President, and Director General Grossi.

I recognize the representative of Putin's regime in the permanent seat of the Soviet Union. He has always used the platform of the Security Council to parade himself on the screens of Russian propaganda television channels. What is interesting, however, is that today he is also quite on the defensive, judging by the tone of his speech.

I would like to thank Director General Grossi of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for his briefing. I would also like to express our gratitude

to the IAEA for its efforts to maintain nuclear safety and security against a backdrop of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the nuclear risks that it entails. We particularly appreciate the activities of the IAEA experts at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, temporarily occupied by Russia, who are working under difficult conditions with regular provocations and denials of access from the Russian occupation administration.

Today's meeting has been requested in response to the further escalation of the situation at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, which has become routine ever since the Russian Federation first occupied it. Let me therefore reiterate that the only root cause of all the risks to nuclear safety and security is Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine.

What happened at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant on 7 and 9 April 2024 and thereafter was a well-planned, false-flag operation by the Russian Federation. It was aimed at shifting the focus from the above root cause and from the only way to remove all threats to nuclear safety and security — de-occupation of the station.

The Russian Federation is attempting to hide its own guilt and move our debate to fabricated issues designed to blame Ukraine in the hope of removing the issue of de-occupation from the agenda. To that end, the Russians want to feed the world a version that the nuclear reactors, whose defence was designed to withstand the heaviest strikes, were attacked with low-power, close-range, first-person view drones — the type of drone that is used to target infantry and small vehicles within a distance of several kilometres.

That disinformation campaign launched by Russia is, in fact, also an attempt to instrumentalize the very presence of the Agency for propaganda purposes. We, in turn, believe in the integrity and leadership of the IAEA in responding to the threats arising from the occupation of the plant.

As a result of Russia's criminal actions at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, each of the seven indispensable pillars of the IAEA on nuclear safety and security, as well as most of the five principles to help ensure nuclear safety and security at the station, have been violated. The progressing militarization of the station and adjacent occupied territories by Russia remains a part of Russia's military strategy. Moscow is using them as cover for artillery strikes on territories

and settlements on the other bank of the Dnipro River. The international Support and Assistance Mission to Zaporizhzhya regularly records numerous rounds of outgoing artillery fire from near the facility.

The presence of Russian military equipment and personnel at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant was confirmed by independent observers and the IAEA. Recently new footage of Russian soldiers and military equipment in the halls of the power units emerged on social media. The IAEA continues to report on the facts of the Mission's denial of access to some locations at the station, including some parts of the turbine halls and the cooling pond isolation gate.

Russian military actions regularly lead to the loss of off-site power. For instance, on 4 April, before the 330-kilovolt line was disconnected, the Agency's team on the ground heard numerous rounds of outgoing artillery fire. The list of violations by Russia also includes planting anti-personnel landmines at the perimeter of the station, blocking access for legitimate management and personnel to the facility, switching off automated system-data transmission from the radiation monitoring system, as well as failing to provide timely and full maintenance activities.

The international community continues to witness Russia's reckless behaviour, including full ignorance of the IAEA Board of Governors resolutions on the safety, security and safeguards implications of the situation in Ukraine, of 3 March 2022, 15 September 2022, 17 November 2022 and 7 March 2024, as well as the resolution of the IAEA General Conference from 28 September 2023.

In that regard, we reaffirm that the only way out of the current very precarious situation is the complete de-militarization and de-occupation of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and adjacent territories. That is a key prerequisite for restoring not only nuclear safety and security, but also respect for international law. The return of the station to the full control of Ukraine is the only guarantee of nuclear and radiation safety.

We categorically reject the insane allegations that Ukraine may be seeking to cause nuclear disaster. Does anyone believe that a country that is still recovering from the biggest nuclear disaster would like a repeat of the 1986 Chernobyl incident? That idea could enter the minds of only the Kremlin propagandists, as only they openly dream of radioactive dust replacing Ukrainian cities. I brought the relevant quotes to the Council's attention on Thursday (see S/PV.9600).

Ukraine, in turn, is making all possible military and diplomatic efforts to ensure nuclear safety and security, while exercising its inherent right to self-defence, under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

We call on the international community to strongly condemn Russian provocations at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and join the implementation of the peace formula proposed by Ukraine's President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, one of the important points of which is the restoration of nuclear and radiation safety.

Ukraine also calls on all our partners to increase their pressure on the aggressor State, including by imposing sanctions against the atomic energy sector, in order to prevent further Russian provocations at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and facilitate the de-occupation of the plant.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Latvia.

Mr. Ilgis (Latvia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the three Baltic States — Estonia, Lithuania and my own country, Latvia. We also align ourselves with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union.

We thank the United States and Slovenia for requesting this meeting and Malta's presidency for convening it. We appreciate the thorough briefing by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Grossi.

The Baltic States have repeatedly condemned Russia's illegal seizure of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, the largest in Europe. We reiterate our strong call on Russia to withdraw its troops and military equipment from the plant and the entire internationally recognized territory of Ukraine. The replacement of the experienced Ukrainian licensed staff at the plant by the Russian military and other unauthorized personnel is illegal and poses a threat to its safe operation. Reports also indicate such dangerous steps as the placement of Russia's troops and vehicles inside the nuclear power plant turbine halls and even the placement of mines along the plant's perimeter.

We welcome the role that the IAEA has played to monitor safety and security at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant from the very beginning of its illegal seizure by Russia. We commend the IAEA staff's tireless efforts in monitoring the plant's observance of the Director General's seven indispensable pillars and

the five concrete principles, despite Russia's constant attempts to limit their timely access to all areas. In that regard, we are deeply concerned about the latest news that the Zaporizhzhya plant was directly targeted through military action, escalating the security risks, including the risk of a nuclear accident at the site. We believe that it is imperative to uphold the seven indispensable pillars and the five concrete principles and to grant the IAEA experts full access to the site.

Any further escalation at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant resulting from Russia's illegal actions may pose unimaginable consequences, including radioactive contamination, environmental devastation and a widespread humanitarian crisis that could reverberate across borders and generations.

While addressing separate incidents, it is also of the utmost importance to maintain focus on the long-term solution. That solution is very simple. If Russia withdrew its forces from the Zaporizhzhya plant and the whole territory of Ukraine, there would be no more concerns about nuclear safety and security in Ukraine, just as there were none before Russia's illegal full-scale invasion in February 2022. Four resolutions adopted by the IAEA Board of Governors have already called for the immediate withdrawal of all of Russia's personnel from the Zaporizhzhya plant, which would allow Ukraine to re-establish its full and legitimate control over the plant.

However, Russia is doing the exact opposite. We are witnessing Russia expanding its campaign of attacks on Ukraine's critical civilian infrastructure, including energy infrastructure. Russia is trying to brutally subjugate Ukraine and its people by cutting their access to electricity, water and other vital amenities. The only reason for that punishment is Ukraine's heroic resistance to Russia's senseless aggression.

On Friday, in this very Chamber, we heard once again Russia's accusations about Western arms deliveries to Ukraine (see S/PV.9601), which supposedly contribute to escalating the conflict. But make no mistake about the real cause of Russia's anxiety. Those weapons, including air and missile defence, which Ukraine receives from its international partners, are often the very last obstacle preventing Russia from achieving its goal of destroying Ukraine's civilian infrastructure and communities.

In conclusion, let me underline that the international community must not allow Russia to endanger nuclear safety and security in Ukraine or elsewhere any longer.

The IAEA needs our full support in fulfilling its mandate. Equally, we must continue to assist Ukraine in its efforts to repel Russia's attack, including on its civilian infrastructure, such as power plants. The Baltic States will continue to resolutely support Ukraine's legitimate right to self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Lambrinidis.

Mr. Lambrinidis: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The following countries align themselves with this statement: North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia, Iceland, Norway, Andorra, Monaco and San Marino.

Allow me to express our appreciation to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Grossi, for his briefing, and let me convey the EU's gratitude for the IAEA's impressive work in Ukraine, carried out under the very difficult circumstances of Russia's war of aggression against the country.

Russia cannot divert attention from its illegal invasion of an independent country, its attempts to illegally annex Ukraine's regions or its attempts to normalize its illegal seizure of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Russia is fully responsible for the nuclear safety and security risks it is causing.

The EU reiterates its utmost concern about nuclear safety and security in Ukraine. Europe's largest nuclear power plant is caught on the front line. For the first time, a country — a permanent member of the Security Council no less — has illegally seized a nuclear power plant of one of its neighbours.

The IAEA Director General has reported on numerous issues concerning the plant. Those risks are a direct consequence of Russia's war of aggression and its illegal seizure of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations. The most recent alarming developments, as reported by the IAEA, add to our concerns. The Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant was recently hit by drones, including at reactor building 6. That is very serious as, for the first time since November 2022, the facility was directly targeted in a military action.

It once again underscores that Russia's illegal seizure of the plant significantly increases the risks to nuclear safety and security, potentially leading to accidents with severe consequences for Ukraine and beyond. Attacks from or against the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant are irresponsible and are not acceptable.

Furthermore, the IAEA has repeatedly reported the presence of Russian troops and military vehicles at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. According to the second of the five principles, the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant should not be used as storage or a base for heavy weapons or military personnel.

In the past weeks, significantly, Russia has also intensified its attacks on Ukraine's broader energy infrastructure. Such air strikes against critical civilian infrastructure are simply unacceptable.

The EU reiterates its strong support for the work of the IAEA and its Director General under the unprecedented circumstances. The five principles for avoiding a nuclear accident at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and the seven pillars for ensuring nuclear safety and security in armed conflict must be respected at all times. To monitor their observance, the IAEA experts must be given timely access to all areas at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. It is of paramount importance that the conditions at the power plant allow for a continued and secure presence of the IAEA experts.

Russia's attempts to illegally take ownership of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant are illegal and have no validity under international law. Russia must immediately, unconditionally and completely withdraw all its forces and military equipment from the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and the whole territory of Ukraine. Returning the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant to the full control of the competent and legitimate Ukrainian authorities is the only lasting solution to bring to an end the current serious threats to nuclear safety and security.

The EU underlines its unwavering support to Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. The EU will stand with Ukraine and in support for the Charter of the United Nations for as long as it takes.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Poland.

Mr. Szczerski (Poland): Let me start by saying that Poland commends the brave mission of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Ukraine. Its continued presence at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and in all other Ukrainian nuclear facilities allow for independent information on the situation on the ground. Let me assure the Council that Poland will continue to support the Agency in fulfilling its mission in Ukraine, both politically and logistically, as we have been doing so far.

In that regard, we would like to thank the Agency and personally Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi for providing us with comprehensive information and an assessment of the situation at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant during the Agency's meeting of the Board of Governors, which took place in Vienna on 11 April. Poland, as it is doing today, actively contributed to the discussion by delivering a national statement. We also want to express our gratitude to Director General Grossi for his timely briefing to the Security Council on this extremely important and sensitive matter, of which this organ should be continuously aware.

In recent days there have been reports of drone attacks on the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, which has been illegally seized by Russia in a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations. They are a clear sign of the worsening of the nuclear safety and security situation there. Those incidents once again underscore the fact that Russia's actions are significantly increasing the risks to nuclear safety and security, potentially leading to accidents.

The IAEA has repeatedly reported about the stationing of Russian troops and military vehicles at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, as well as about the presence of mines within the perimeter of the plant. We underscore that, according to the Director General's five principles, the plant should not be used as a storage or a base for heavy weapons or military personnel that could be used for an attack beyond its premises, as we have heard so many times in today's debate from many Member States.

In response to the rhetoric repeatedly used by Moscow, including today, referring to Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant as a "Russian nuclear installation", Poland underscores that Russian actions in and around Ukrainian nuclear facilities, in particular the illegal annexation of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, will never be accepted. It is absolutely clear that the

only reason to discuss this extremely dangerous case is the Russian aggression against Ukraine. That is the source of the significant deterioration of the security situation, including its non-proliferation dimension.

The resolutions of the IAEA General Conference and the Board of Governors adopted so far — some of them initiated and others supported by Poland — are very important in that context. The first one, sponsored by Poland and Canada, was adopted by the Board on 3 March 2022, almost immediately after the start of the full-scale invasion. All of the resolutions described the Russian military presence as a direct threat to the nuclear safety, security and safeguards situation in Ukraine.

We will continue to call on Russia to withdraw its military equipment and all personnel, including that of Rosatom, from the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and to return its full control to its rightful owner, which is Ukraine. While recalling General Assembly resolution ES-11/1, adopted on 2 March, and resolution ES-11/4, adopted on 12 October 2022, we urge Russia to implement the resolutions of the Board of Governors of the IAEA in a full and effective manner. Let me assure the Council that Poland will continue to follow the situation around the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and other Ukrainian nuclear installations with great attention. We consider the role of the IAEA in the matter to be indispensable, and therefore believe it is essential that the Security Council be regularly briefed by the Director General.

Almost 38 years ago, on 26 April 1986, the Chernobyl disaster happened. Poland, Ukraine's closest neighbour to the west, learned first-hand about the harmful effects that such catastrophes have on our health and environment. Based on that experience, we have one thing to say, which is that we must do our utmost to prevent such a disastrous event from ever happening again. Bearing in mind the tragic consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, and given the context of the ongoing situation at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, we call on Russia to stop playing with fire, for the sake of the well-being of current and future generations.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Grossi to briefly respond to the comments.

Mr. Grossi: I would like to thank the members of the Council for their comments, which are very important to us, just as those that we heard from the Board of

Governors of the Agency a week ago are. In spite of the very dire circumstances that we are all living through, and notwithstanding the obvious political differences that may exist among certain members, it is very clear to me — and we see and get enormous encouragement from it — that there is a common understanding and, I would say, unanimous support for the IAEA's work and the indispensable nature of that work.

What I can tell the Council right now is that we will of course be multiplying our vigilance. We want to determine whether these recent episodes are likely to continue, which we hope will not be the case. I can inform the Council that tomorrow we will have

our eighteenth rotation at the plant. We have just finished the deconflicting with the authorities of the Governments of Ukraine and the Russian Federation. We therefore hope that the IAEA's eighteenth team, in this extraordinary operation that started in September 2022, will continue our work. I commit myself and the Agency to continuing that work and, of course, to keeping the Council informed of the situation on the ground.

The President: I thank Mr. Grossi for his clarifications and further comments provided.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.