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Ukraine stresses nuclear energy safety at summit meeting

By Reuters

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Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine Andriy Yermak speaks at the Copenhagen Democracy Summit, in Copenhagen, Denmark May 14, 2024. Ritzau Scanpix/Ida Marie Odgaard via REUTERS/File... [Purchase Licensing Rights](#) [Read more](#)

Oct 17 (Reuters) - A senior Ukrainian official called on Thursday for intensified efforts to uphold nuclear safety in view of Russia's occupation of Europe's largest nuclear power station and its repeated strikes on the energy grid.

Andriy Yermak, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy's chief of staff, said the capture of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear station, which no longer produces power, underscored Moscow's "large-scale militarisation of nuclear power".

"Seizing the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station...has become an unprecedented violation of international law and the norms of nuclear safety," Yermak said on the presidential website after speaking online to a meeting in France on nuclear safety.

"The station has been transformed into a military base and its personnel work under constant pressure and threats."

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot, who hosted the meeting, said the talks were important to deal with continuing security risks at the plant, made up of six reactors.

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"There is a risk and that is the reason why, with the Ukrainians, we wanted to convene this conference in Paris, in order to discuss the situation in terms of nuclear security and safety today in Ukraine," he told LCI television.

France, he said, supported actions to uphold the actions of the U.N. nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, in order to "discuss conditions under which this power plant can reopen at the time of peace because it will be decisive for the reconstruction of Ukraine".

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Russia and Ukraine regularly accuse each other of attacking the Zaporizhzhia station. The IAEA has stationed observers at the plant and called on both sides to show restraint.

Yermak said 70 countries and international organisations attended the meeting, one of several follow-up gatherings after June's Swiss-organised "world peace summit" -- to consider points of Zelenskiy's peace plan, first proposed in late 2022

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Russian attacks have intensified since March in what appears to be a campaign to degrade the system ahead of winter.

Speaking separately on television, Yermak said Ukraine wanted to hold meetings on all points of the president's plan by the end of October in order to draft an implementation plan.

Zelenskiy, who presented his follow-up "victory plan" to the EU and NATO on Thursday, wants to hold a second summit with Russia in attendance by the end of the year. Moscow, uninvited to the first meeting, has said it will attend no such gathering.

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