

Open letter from the Nuclear Veterans of the Czech Republic to the IAEA Board of Governors
25 March 2022

Your Excellency,

We, the Nuclear Veterans of the Czech Republic, have been following with great concern the actions of the Russian troops following their invasion of Ukraine. The invasion is accompanied by the killing of the population, the destruction of civilian property, infrastructure, agriculture and the environment of Ukraine, and the military seizure of two nuclear power plants.

The majority of our association members approved and published the document "Appeal of the Nuclear Veterans Association of the Czech Republic to end the military invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation" on February 28, 2022. In it, we demand the cessation of fighting and the return of troops outside the territory of Ukraine and declare our support for Ukrainian nuclear veterans. We are implementing our declared support by direct assistance to specific experts from Kiev. The Czech Nuclear Society supported our appeal and the European Nuclear Society accepted it. The Association of Nuclear Veterans of Bulgaria, Finland and Ukraine joined our appeal.

An extraordinary meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors was held on 2 and 3 March 2022 to address the implications of the current situation in Ukraine for nuclear safety and radiation protection, the security of nuclear materials and the application of safeguards under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We have studied the resolution; we fully supported it and followed up on its recommendations.

We are aware that the Board of Directors of the European Nuclear Society has decided (8 March 2022): European Nuclear Society suspends all activities with organizations associated with the authorities of the Russian Federation and Belarus until the end of the Russian aggression in Ukraine. It suspends the corporate membership of ROSATOM and ATOMTEX in the European Nuclear Society until further notice. We further support the statement by IAEA Director General Grossi: '*... that all parties refrain from measures or actions that could jeopardize the protection of nuclear material and the safe operation of all nuclear facilities*'.

We also respect the fact that the well-known Ukrainian nuclear expert and former member of the IAEA Board of Governors, Mr. Nikolai Steinberg, has sent an open letter to Director General Grossi containing a number of questions, suggestions and also reservations about the IAEA's actions to date in the situation of the aggressive attack on Ukraine by the Russian Federation. We fully support this ~~open~~ letter not only as veterans of the nuclear power and industry but also as citizens of a state that was the subject of the military invasion in 1968 and a long-lasting occupation by Warsaw Pact troops led by the army of the former USSR.

We submit to the IAEA Board of Governors the following suggestions and recommendations based on our experience, consistent with the above findings and opinions:

- We recommend that the IAEA Board of Governors, by virtue of its role and responsibility for the safety and security of nuclear facilities, address the United Nations General Assembly immediately. The first goal should be to discuss the threat to nuclear power plants in Ukraine from an aggressor. The next one should be a question of the provision of nuclear safety in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in Europe, and request for confirmation of the IAEA's mandate to act promptly on this matter.

Based on our experience and practical knowledge of nuclear safety assurance, we consider it necessary for the IAEA to use its full authority (backed by the position of the vote of 141 countries against Russian military aggression) to try to enforce the following measures by its unequivocal position:

- The aggressor must immediately leave the territory of all nuclear power plants and other nuclear facilities of Ukraine, if occupied. The same applies to the advisers appointed from Rosatom to supervise the activities of the personnel of Ukrainian nuclear power plants.

- Declaring and enforcing the observance of a no-fly zone, for both aircraft, missiles and artillery, over nuclear power plants and other nuclear facilities containing radioactive materials. The no-fly zone means establishment of a 10 km zone without the military presence of the armed forces of all states in the conflict so that it is impossible to build logistics centres of the armed forces or other support centres of the opposing armies in this zone. This zone must be controlled by military units of the United Nations international forces, to the exclusion of the troops of the aggressor.
- Deploy IAEA missions to inspect Ukrainian nuclear facilities to ensure at least a defence mechanism and safe operating status. A ceasefire enforced by international forces (to the exclusion of the aggressor), must be declared and observed for the duration of the international missions at all Ukrainian nuclear power plants.
- Take nuclear power plant personnel under the protection of the United Nations and consider any attack on nuclear facilities as an attack on United Nations personnel. This is a concrete step to promote nuclear security.
- Revise the unambiguous interpretation of the IAEA Statute immediately. The IAEA Statute and relevant IAEA governing documents must be supplemented with principles for when nuclear power plants and other nuclear facilities are in a state of war or under terrorist attack (especially of the state terrorism type) so that nuclear security can be maintained/re-established.
- The United Nations International Force must conduct a review of the status of nuclear materials at the Zaporozhye and Chernobyl nuclear power plants, hitherto occupied by Russian forces. These troops must leave the site immediately, including Rosatom experts. Influencing the management of an occupied nuclear power plant by the experts brought in is certainly contrary to the limits and conditions of the nuclear power plants in operation.

Only after the above measures have been put in place and the recommended requirements have been met will it be possible to conclude that nuclear safety and compliance are once again under the full control of the IAEA.

Yours Excellency, the information at your meeting on 7 March 2022 that Director General Grossi was prepared to travel to Ukraine to help address the release of nuclear power plants from occupiers on the ground seemed hopeful. So far, this has not happened. We feel that the IAEA has thus missed an opportunity to assert its importance and raise its profile as an international institution established by the United Nations in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and nuclear non-proliferation. We still consider it important for an official IAEA mission to travel to verify the situation at the Chernobyl and Zaporozhye nuclear power plants as soon as possible.

The nuclear power industry will not gain credibility simply by repeated statements by the IAEA that all is well at the Ukrainian nuclear power plants. Unless compliance with and enforcement of nuclear safety and security are guaranteed, even in emergency situations such as war and state terrorism, the desired development of emission-free nuclear energy and credible confirmation of the safety of nuclear facilities cannot be counted on.

On behalf of the signatories from among the members of the Nuclear Veterans Association



Dalibor Matějů
Vice-President



Jiří Marek
President