



International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War *Canada*

We are committed to the abolition of nuclear weapons, the prevention of war, the promotion of non-violent means of conflict resolution and social justice in a sustainable world.

Letter Regarding the Targeting of Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant

The following letter was authored by IPPNWC President John Guilfoyle, and sent to heads of Government in July 2023.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is the first time war has engulfed operating nuclear plants and, in a real sense, weaponized them as potential radiological weapons, or “dirty bombs”.

As IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi has documented, Zaporizhzhia has been under comprehensive and unprecedented assault. This has included:

- repeated shelling of the plant, with Russian troops starting a fire when they seized the plant.
- frequent interruption of the critical electricity supply to the plant, forcing operators to rely on emergency diesel generators as the last line of defence.
- a full-scale occupation by Russian troops, with far fewer than the normal staff working at gunpoint under extreme psychological and physical duress.
- the facility being turned into a military base laden with heavy weapons and surrounded by landmines and other explosives.

On June 6, the explosive breach of the Kakhovka Dam jeopardised the plant’s ultimate source of cooling water.

The other three nuclear power plants in Ukraine have also experienced interruptions to their electricity supply. In addition, other nuclear facilities have been shelled, struck by missiles or otherwise damaged.

.

The IAEA and independent experts have highlighted the very real risk of a catastrophe.

Russia has already launched large-scale attacks on civilian infrastructure in Ukraine, including its energy grid. Russia may resort to turning Zaporizhzhia into a radiological weapon, despite how close the plant is to its own territory.

Russia’s ongoing failure to agree to the IAEA plea to establish a demilitarised zone in and around Zaporizhzhia adds to this concern.

The reality is that as long as nuclear power plants continue to operate, we are frighteningly vulnerable not only to severe accidents, but also to the weaponization of these facilities. This has become abundantly clear at Zaporizhzhia.



International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War *Canada*

We are committed to the abolition of nuclear weapons, the prevention of war, the promotion of non-violent means of conflict resolution and social justice in a sustainable world.

The danger that nuclear power poses is underlined by the recent decision, at Fukushima, to release huge volumes of water contaminated with nuclear fuel into the Pacific ocean. The Japanese government is not saying what amount of radiation (or source term) is proposed to be released. The ongoing contamination of local fish used for food demonstrates the threat to the environment and to human health.

Nuclear plants are vulnerable both in war and in peace.

Attached is a resolution passed at the recent international congress of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) at Mombasa, Kenya. Quoting President Macron of France, it clearly links nuclear power to nuclear weapons. The situation in Ukraine bears this out all too clearly.

While all efforts must be made to halt the death and destruction in Ukraine as soon as possible, we urge you to help put in place a demilitarized zone, policed by the United Nations, around all nuclear plants in Ukraine.

In addition, we ask that the government of Canada stop promoting nuclear power as a suitable, safe and sustainable alternative to fossil fuels. In particular, we ask that government support for the development of small modular nuclear reactors is halted. Nuclear power is not a safe or economical solution to the climate crisis.

We appreciate your continued efforts to keep Canadians healthy and safe. We feel that these suggestions are critical to assist in this mission.