



Chernobyl reactor shield hit by Russian drone, Ukraine says



Russian drone attack has hit the radiation shelter over the damaged reactor at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has said.

The overnight strike hit the shelter of the plant's destroyed former fourth power unit, causing a fire that has since been extinguished, he added. Russia has not yet commented.

As of Friday morning, radiation levels had not increased at the plant, Zelensky said. The UN's nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), said fire safety personnel and vehicles responded within minutes of an overnight explosion. No casualties were reported, the agency added. The IAEA, which monitors nuclear safety around the world, said radiation levels inside and outside Chernobyl remain normal and stable.

The agency remains on "high alert" after the incident, with its director general Rafael Mariano Grossi saying there is "no room for complacency". Chernobyl is the site of the world's worst nuclear accident - a catastrophic explosion that sent a plume of radioactive material into the air in 1986, triggering a public health emergency across Europe.

Zelensky posted footage on X appearing to show damage to the giant shield, made of concrete and steel, which covers the remains of the reactor that lost its roof in the explosion.

The shield is designed to prevent further radioactive material leaking out over the next century. It measures 275m (900ft) wide and 108m (354ft) tall and cost \$1.6bn (£1.3bn) to construct. Every night, Russia carries out such attacks on Ukraine's infrastructure and cities," Zelensky said. He called for "unified pressure" to hold Moscow accountable. Later on Friday, Zelensky will meet US Vice-President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio for talks in Munich, with the war in Ukraine expected to dominate a major security meeting of world leaders.

IAEA head Rafael Grossi condemned that attack on his staff as "unacceptable", stressing that the agency was "working to prevent a nuclear accident during the military conflict".