# Ukraine warns of nuclear disaster risks amid Russian attacks on power plants



Ukraine is facing heightened fears of a nuclear disaster amid ongoing Russian attacks targeting the country’s nuclear power infrastructure, according to senior Ukrainian officials. The warnings come as Ukraine commemorated the 39th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster, one of the worst nuclear accidents in history.

On 26 April 1986, a catastrophic explosion occurred at the fourth reactor of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, located around 60 miles north of Kyiv, the Ukrainian capital. The explosion released vast amounts of radioactive elements, contaminating areas thousands of kilometres away from the site. The surrounding exclusion zone remains a stark reminder of the devastation caused by nuclear incidents. Speaking on the anniversary, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky paid tribute to the thousands of Ukrainians who sacrificed their lives to contain the fallout. Posting on X, he said: "We honour the courage and selflessness of the thousands of people who protected Ukraine and all other countries from the consequences of the Chornobyl disaster."

While the events of 1986 stemmed from a civilian accident, the present-day risks to Ukraine’s nuclear sector stem from deliberate military actions. The country’s Energy Minister, German Galushchenko, told the Telegraph that Russia has been launching missile and drone attacks on key nuclear power plants across Ukraine. These strikes specifically target substations that supply independent cooling power vital for safe plant operation.

Galushchenko explained the gravity of the situation: “Russia has been attacking the substations supplying independent cooling power to the nuclear station. So when there is destruction of these power supplies, the nuclear units go into an emergency shutdown regime.” He added that the plants have to rely on reserve diesel generators for cooling during these shutdowns, but emphasised this is precarious. “The electricity for cooling then has to be supplied by a reserve diesel generator – but this is dangerous [because reserve generators can fail]. We have been one step short of a nuclear meltdown many times now.”

These developments highlight the ongoing threats to Ukraine’s critical energy infrastructure as hostilities continue. Moscow’s sustained drone and rocket attacks not only target civilian cities but are putting the safety of Ukraine’s nuclear power facilities at risk, raising international concern over potential nuclear incidents resulting from military conflict.

The Express is reporting that the situation remains volatile, as Ukraine fights to safeguard its energy systems and prevent a disaster that could have repercussions far beyond its borders.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2025/04/27/ukraine-one-step-away-nuclear-meltdown-energy-minister/> - This article supports the claim that Ukraine's energy minister, German Galushchenko, warned of a heightened risk of nuclear meltdowns due to Russian attacks on Ukraine's nuclear facilities, targeting substations and cooling systems.
2. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2025/04/27/ukraine-one-step-away-nuclear-meltdown-energy-minister/> - The article also corroborates the specific risk associated with backup diesel generators for cooling, highlighting their potential failure.
3. <https://world-nuclear.org/information-library/country-profiles/countries-t-z/ukraine-russia-war-and-nuclear-energy> - This page provides background on the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war on Ukraine's nuclear facilities, including control changes at Chernobyl and Zaporizhzhia plants.
4. <https://kyivindependent.com/russia-attacked-chornobyl-nuclear-plant-in-february-damaging-confinement-can-it-be-fully-restored/> - This article explains the damage caused by a Russian drone attack on the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in February, highlighting the risks to atomic safety in Europe.
5. <https://www.oecd-nea.org/jcms/pl_66130/ukraine-current-status-of-nuclear-power-installations> - This webpage provides updates on the operational status of Ukraine's nuclear power installations, such as operational tests at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant.
6. <https://world-nuclear.org/information-library/country-profiles/countries-t-z/ukraine-russia-war-and-nuclear-energy> - It also mentions the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) permanent presence at Ukraine's nuclear plants, highlighting international oversight and concern.
7. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2047261/ukraine-nuclear-power-russia> - Please view link - unable to able to access data