

The plant continues to be operated by Ukrainian staff, but under Russian control. During the battle for the plant, a fire broke out in a training facility, a large calibre bullet pierced an outer wall of Reactor No. 4 and an artillery shell hit a transformer at Reactor No. 6.

In August Rafael Grossi, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said he was “extremely concerned” by reports of damage to the power station caused by shelling on 5<sup>th</sup> August, which, he said, “underlines the very real risk of a nuclear disaster that could threaten public health and the environment in Ukraine and beyond.” He also called for IAEA experts to be allowed to inspect the damage, a call later reiterated by the UN secretary general, Antonio Guterres.

The Ukrainian nuclear power company Energoatom, who owned the plant before the Russian take-over. reported that the shelling had damaged a power cable, forced one of the reactors to stop working and that “there are still risks of leaking hydrogen and radioactive substances, and the risk of fire is also high”. The head of Energoatom, Petro Gotin warned of the danger of shells hitting containers of highly-radioactive spent fuel rods on site, which, he said “could lead to the situation spiralling out of control...a Fukushima or Chernobyl”. It has indeed been reported that rockets have landed within 24 metres of these containers.

It was later claimed by Ukraine that on 6<sup>th</sup> August Russian shelling had damaged three radiation sensors and hurt a worker at the plant.

Ukraine and Russia both blamed the other for the shelling and Ukraine accused troops of siting heavy weapons at the plant, presumably in order to put them under the safety umbrella provided by the reactors.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> August it was reported in *The Guardian* that a detailed plan had been drawn up by Russia to disconnect Zaporizhzhia from Ukraine's power grid and, it seems re-attach it to the Russian one. *The Guardian* said it had been told that such a disconnection would risk a failure of the plant's cooling systems, potentially leading to a melt-down.

*The Guardian* also reported that, according to Petro Gotin, the plant's electricity connections were already in a critical condition, with three of the main lines connecting it to the grid having been broken during the war, and two of three back-up lines connecting it to a conventional plant also down.

Indeed, Ukrainian president, Zelensky, reported that on the 25<sup>th</sup>, the final link to the grid had been cut, due to fires caused by shelling, but that back-up systems had kicked in to prevent disaster, and a reconnection had been made to the grid from the remaining operating reactor.

Russia eventually agreed to allow a 14-person IAEA team to visit Zaporizhzhia to carry out an inspection, which eventually, after delays caused by continued shelling, took place on 1<sup>st</sup> September. Russian officials had insisted that the inspectors should only stay one day, but the IAEA chief, Rafael Grossi, who led the inspection, said two IAEA staff would stay on to provide constant monitoring and an uninterrupted flow of information to the IAEA HQ in Vienna. This the Russians conceded.

Rafael said that he had seen everything he had requested to see during the inspection and that it was obvious that the physical integrity of the plant had been violated several times. Energoatom claimed however that the inspectors had not been shown some areas of the site and had witnessed a staged show.

On 6<sup>th</sup> September, following the inspection, the UN's nuclear watchdog called for a safety and security protection zone at and around the site and said that shelling there from whatever side must end immediately. Zelensky welcomed the idea, but, not surprisingly, Russia has not responded.

## **LEGAL CHALLENGE TO SIZEWELL C**

On 3<sup>rd</sup> September, the group *Together Against Sizewell C* issued the below press release:

### **Johnson's nuclear fantasy faces a legal challenge and regulatory approval**

The campaign group Together Against Sizewell C (TASC) has challenged a key component of Mr Johnson's 'energy security' policy in the High Court on several grounds. With the support of other groups in the area which are fighting the Sizewell C development – Suffolk Coastal Friends of the Earth and Stop Sizewell C – TASC has pointed out that the £20bn-£30bn nuclear development planned for Suffolk's eroding and unstable coast still – after over a decade of EDF indecision – has no guaranteed mains supply of potable water for the development which renders it unable to be considered as a viable project. Bang goes all the much-trumpeted “low carbon” contribution to greenhouse gas reductions or to solving what is a cost of living crisis erroneously referred to as an “energy crisis”.

Pete Wilkinson, TASC Chairman and co-founder of Greenpeace UK and Friends of the Earth, explained, “We are facing a cost of living crisis rather than an energy crisis which is the result, in part, of course, of the war in Ukraine but is also caused by blatant profiteering by the energy suppliers and a government which is reluctant to require them to reduce their profits rather than to squeeze hard-pressed consumers.

“A nuclear future promises delay, high costs, generational inequity through the legacy of around 42,000 tonnes of spent nuclear fuel and does nothing to help drive down demand for electricity and the resulting lowering of bills that will bring.

“On top of our legal challenge, Sizewell C has many hoops to jump through yet, not the least of which are the approval of environmental discharge permits and site licences which the Environment Agency and Office for Nuclear Regulation have yet to issue. Those processes are not done deals either and will be subject to challenge as well should the regulatory system be deemed insufficiently robust.

Johnson’s parting nuclear legacy to the UK public is a poisoned chalice. The UK public he has taken for mugs for his entire premiership has nothing to thank him for except a nuclear waste and cost burden which will be suffered by generations as yet unborn.”

Information: Pete Wilkinson (Chairperson), 01728 660232/07940 524831

TASC is fundraising towards the costs of the judicial review: <https://www.crowdjustice.com/case/save-suffolks-heritage-coast-w/>

## BORIS’S LAST HURRAH?

The day before TASC issued the above press release Boris Johnson visited the intended (since 2010!) site for Sizewell C nuclear power station and for which his government gave a go-ahead in July.

At Sizewell, in a speech, he called “go nuclear, and go large and go with Sizewell C”, while pledging a £700 million government investment in the project (Though he’s hardly in a position to make such a pledge with only four days remaining as Prime Minister. One fears however that the incoming Prime Minister, Liz Truss, as a Boris acolyte will be only too keen to redeem this pledge.)

French state energy company is EDF, recently fully nationalised by the French government, is responsible for the project, but is in great financial difficulties and has been desperately looking for companies and other governments to invest in the project that it is estimated will cost £20 billion. In the light of this, £700m from the UK government is chicken-feed – 0.35% of the projected cost.

Without any such large-scale investment in the project your editor is doubtful the EDF or the French government will be keen in going ahead with the project. Building is currently supposed to start in 2023

Moreover, experience with the building of other reactors of the type planned for Sizewell C suggests that it would take at least 10 years to build and is thus no answer to the current energy crisis, while renewable energy sources powered by wind and sun are much cheaper and much quicker to build.

# KICK NUCLEAR

**September 2022**

There was no August edition

The monthly newsletter of Kick Nuclear and the Nuclear Trains Action Group (NTAG)

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We hold “Remember Fukushima – End Nuclear Power” vigils in London on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and last Fridays of each month, from 11am to 12.30pm outside the Japanese Embassy at 101-104 Piccadilly W1, followed by from 1 to 1.30pm outside the offices of the company owning Fukushima, the Tokyo Electric Power Company at Marlborough Court, 14-18 Holborn WC1.

All anti-nuclear people are invited to join us.

## ZAPORIZHZHIA

The Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Station in south-eastern Ukraine is the largest nuclear power plant in Europe with six large pressurised water nuclear reactors, all brought into operation between 1985 and 1995.



*The six reactors from across the Kakhovka Reservoir, which supplies their cooling water*

After the Russian invasion in February 2022, reactors 5 and 6 were immediately shut down “to reduce risk”.

Two more were subsequently shut down and a 5<sup>th</sup> was shut down, perhaps temporarily, in late August due to shelling.

On 4<sup>th</sup> March, the site was captured by Russian troops, but has remained dangerously close to the

front line between Russian and Ukrainian forces.