

STATEMENT OF GEORGIA
International Atomic Energy Agency
68th General Conference

*Your Excellences,
Distinguished Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election and assure you of Georgia's full support and cooperation in achieving a successful General Conference.

Georgia fully aligns itself with the EU statement and would like to stress the following:

Georgia reiterates its resolute condemnation of Russia's brutal and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, including the systematic missile strikes against Ukraine's energy infrastructure.

Furthermore, we reiterate our concern over Russia's irresponsible nuclear rhetoric and threats to use nuclear force in its illegal, unjustified and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine. This also seriously undermines and has a significant negative impact on the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture.

The nuclear safety and security risks are likely to persist as long as Russia continues its war of aggression and its illegal seizure of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. We urge Russia to cease its military actions, withdraw all its troops and equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine and fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognised borders. Russia must comply with international law and heed the IAEA General Conference and Board of Governors resolutions on the matter.

Georgia commends Director General Grossi, IAEA staff and experts for their work and courageous presence at the ZNPP and Ukraine's other nuclear power plants. They are tirelessly and professionally monitoring the nuclear safety and security situation, implementing safeguards, providing regular, first-hand and impartial information, and important technical assistance and support to Ukraine.

Distinguished Colleagues,

We attach great importance to the IAEA's core mandate in the fields of nuclear safeguards, safety, security, nuclear energy and technical cooperation. In this context, we support universal and effective implementation of the NPT and underline the importance of the Agency's safeguards system in the implementation of the Treaty.

Georgia has committed to contributing to the strengthening of nuclear security and the exclusive peaceful use of atomic energy. We wholeheartedly support the efforts of the IAEA in making a fundamental contribution to international peace and security, as well as in supporting global development.

To further support and facilitate the Agency's core functions and activities, I am pleased to announce that Georgia has, for the very first time, submitted its candidacy for membership on the Board of Governors for the 2024-2026 term. Georgia will act as a responsible Member State, strongly supporting dialogue and cooperation among Member States to promote the core objectives of the IAEA across all key areas. We remain committed to nuclear safety, security, and safeguards, and will continue to fully support the TCP, which addresses the needs and priorities of Member States.

Mr. Chair,

Since the restoration of our independence, breaching obligations of international norms and principles on prevention and response to CBRN threats by Russia has been weakening our national security. Georgia's Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions – illegally occupied by Russia – represent a significant challenge in the context of non-proliferation. Georgia had previously detected the smuggling of nuclear and radioactive materials through the territories of occupied regions.

In response, law-enforcement agencies of Georgia carried out effective measures and accordingly prevented these illegal activities. However, the absence of international presence in the occupied territories of Georgia makes it impossible to conduct any type of verification activities on the ground.

Therefore, the threat of proliferation on the occupied territories of the Black Sea region, stays high on the agenda for regional and international security environment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Georgia, as one of the strategically located countries in the Black Sea region, strives to ensure high standards of CBRN security and safety at national, regional and international levels and plays its essential role in supporting global security architecture.

Technical, financial assistance and active contribution in developing national regulations and systems for nuclear and radiation safety and security that Georgia receives from the Agency and our partners, namely from US, EU and Sweden are highly appreciated.

Mr. Chair,

We look forward to working with fellow Member States as a member of the Board of Governors, to ensure that the Agency remains able to fully discharge its mandate.

Thank you.