

THE NUCLEAR PUSH: HOW RUSSIA USES FIMI FOR ROSATOM'S GLOBAL REACH



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SUMMARY

Rosatom is known as Putin's favorite knight. In 2024, the Russian president [stated](#): “We don't just build power plants. As a rule, we create an industry in the country that starts this type of activity. We train personnel, supply the necessary materials, take away spent fuel.” This comprehensive approach, while appealing to some, also underscores why Russia is often viewed as a risky partner.

Many sources have explored the geopolitical strategy behind Russia's leading nuclear power plant builder. However, Rosatom is not merely a “[Geopolitical Arm](#)” or “[Political corporation](#)” designed to “create and sustain geopolitical dependencies.” Even at the tender stage, its involvement can introduce hybrid threats to the host country.

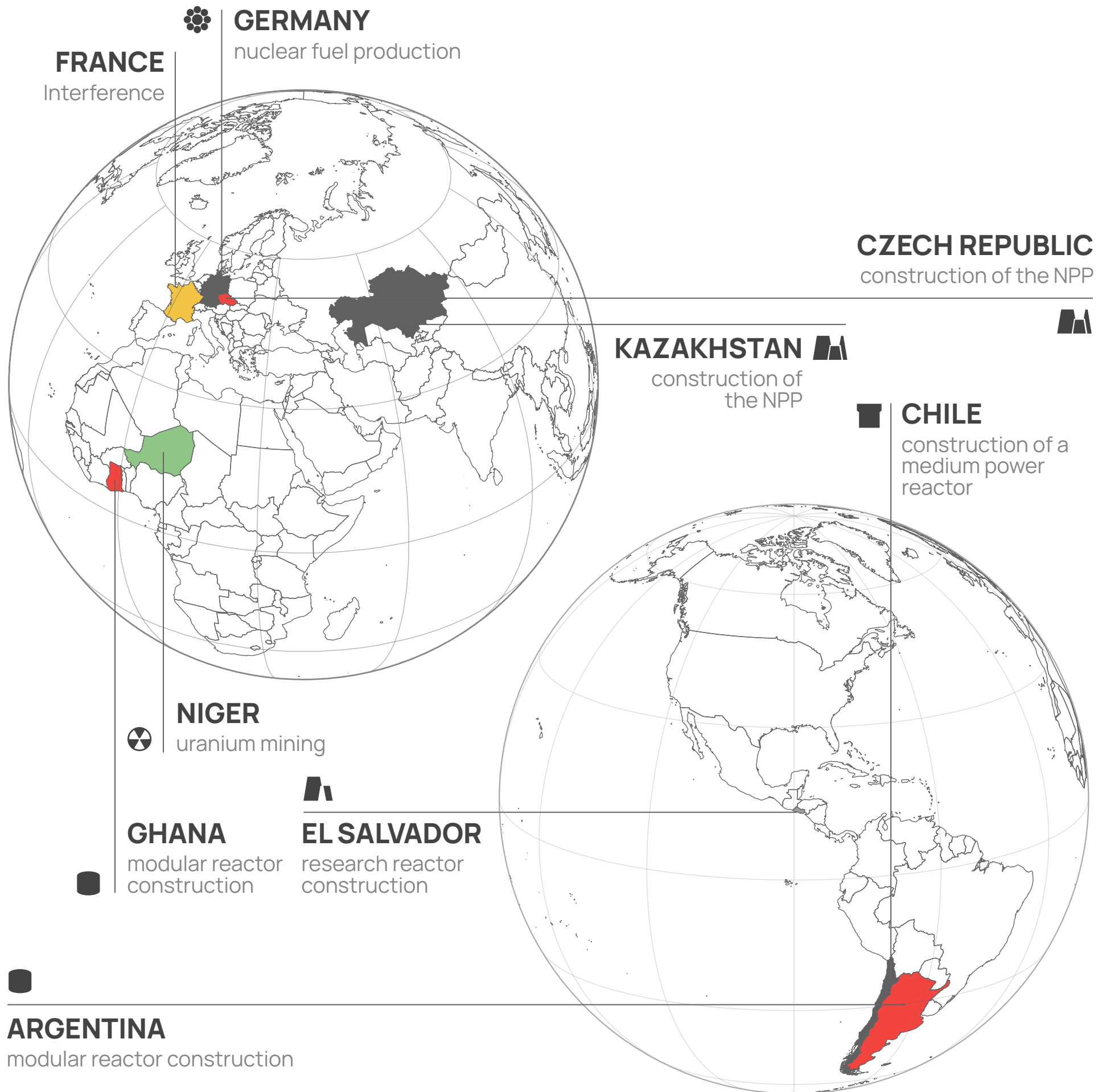
Russia has employed FIMI tactics and actors to secure nuclear construction contracts in countries such as Kazakhstan, Ghana, and Argentina.











Intense competition can drive Russia to interfere in the domestic politics of its competitors. For instance, attempts to disrupt France's Flamanville project stemmed from rivalry with EDF, even though Rosatom collaborates with EDF's subsidiary, Framatome, on a project in the EU.

The analysis reveals that Russia targets competitors across all nuclear sectors—from uranium mining to plant construction. In cases where Rosatom is excluded from tenders, Russian actors have retaliated, as seen in the Czech Republic.

To understand why even polite engagement with Rosatom could come at a high cost, read Osavul's full report.

COUNTRIES IN WHICH OSAVUL IDENTIFIED RUSSIAN INFORMATION ATTACKS SERVING ROSATOM'S INTERESTS IN 2024



-  uranium mining
-  research reactor construction
-  modular reactor construction
-  construction of the NPP
-  the NPP power unit construction
-  nuclear fuel production with Framatome, FR
-  Got Partnership
-  Lost Partnership
-  Waiting for Results
-  Interfered

AN UNAVOIDABLE PARTNER FOR KAZAKHSTAN



By late 2024, Kazakhstan had become a key arena for competing narratives over nuclear power plant construction, with Russia aggressively defending Rosatom's interests. Putin personally [lobbied](#) Kazakh President Kasym-Jomart Tokayev, citing their "[centuries-long history of life in a unified state](#)" and likely motivated by Kazakhstan's status as a global leader in uranium reserves critical for nuclear fuel production.

On October 6, Kazakhstan held a referendum on the project. That same day, Tokayev [specified](#) that an international consortium should build the plant. The shortlist included France's EDF, South Korea's KHNP, China's CNNC, and Rosatom.

Russian-linked actors quickly mobilized on Telegram, sharing 8 messages criticizing non-Russian contenders. They highlighted the Korean reliance on American technology, the Chinese dependence on French systems, and alleged flaws in French tech. The primary [source](#) of this group has been repeatedly noticed in spreading information attacks. By October 13, Russian actors [circulated](#) a [text](#) warning that choosing Western partners could lead to "blackmail" against Kazakhstan.

Such attacks continued, with Russian actors targeting Rosatom's rivals. For instance, on October 24, the Russian state-linked Telegram channel Rybar [claimed](#) KHNP was not credible due to disputes involving U.S. and French companies. This narrative was distributed by at least 16 actors across multiple countries in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Russian, garnering over 200,000 views.

Between November 6 and 19, five more incidents were identified, focusing on Tokayev's trip to Paris and talks with French state-owned companies EDF and Orano (80 messages). These efforts, reaching 380,000 views, accused France of seeking to turn Kazakhstan into a new African-style colony, "replacing Niger".



The story of Russian hybrid tactics in Kazakhstan's nuclear competition is striking, given that Rosatom has a joint [project](#) in Europe with [Framatome](#), a subsidiary of France's state-owned EDF. This partnership, focused on nuclear fuel production and supply for Europe, has been [criticized](#) by Europeans and the U.S., yet it didn't stop Russia from targeting EDF in Kazakhstan. Additionally, Russian interference related to nuclear energy was detected in France itself.

In 2024, Osavul identified at least 70 compromised² and 22 inauthentic³ actors spreading malicious narratives about the Flamanville nuclear power plant, which connected to the French grid in December 2024. These narratives amplified issues such as budget [overruns](#), a 12-year [delay](#), and [shutdowns](#) following the plant's opening. In comment sections, were found messages warning of nuclear dangers, advised buying iodine tablets, and speculated about rising electricity costs.



Figure 1: Flamanville EPR: More than 13 billion euros... The bill has finally quadrupled; the Osavul platform

²Actors who were participated in disinformation propagation or in influence operations

³Actors who demonstrated complex characteristics of such behaviour. For instance, high posting frequency or reposting or other connections with compromised actors

Nucléaire. Des comprimés d'iode à se procurer autour de la centrale de [Flamanville](#) <https://t.co/ckZzb99L2N> via @actufr
18 centrales 📍 des kilomètres à pieds ?
malade einstein 🧠

Figure 2: Nuclear. Iodine tablets available around the Flamanville power plant; the Osavul platform

Spread across Telegram, Twitter, and Facebook in Russian, French, German, and other European languages, these publications garnered 660K views. Additionally, on Dec. 9–10, 12 identical messages in [Russian](#), [French](#), and [Finnish](#) claimed a “terrorist threat in France” endangered nuclear plants, generating 85K views.

THE STRUGGLE FOR AFRICA



Russia has also used information attacks in Africa to compete for nuclear projects, targeting France and the U.S. Africa is a key market for nuclear power due to rising energy demand, and Russia leverages past [propaganda](#) and military interventions in the region.

Andrei Dubrovsky, representative of the Russian propaganda project “African Initiative” [highlighted](#) Russia's interest in **Niger's uranium** mines at the very beginning of 2024, even before Niger's president announced the termination of France's Orano contract on [June 20, 2024](#). Throughout 2024, at least 916 compromised and 292 inauthentic actors covered the contract's termination, with Russian channels like Afrique Libre [framing](#) it as Russia supporting Niger's sovereignty over its resources. Already in November 2024, Niger, with the world's 7th largest uranium deposits, [invited](#) Russian companies to explore and exploit its resources.

In **Ghana**, Russia competed with the U.S.'s Regnum Technology, France's EDF, and China's CNNC for the contract to build the country's first small nuclear reactor. In January 2024, 10 entities shared 11 identical reports in [Russian](#) and [French](#), claiming U.S. startups lacked the

expertise for such technology, positioning Russia as the sole proven leader. These messages gained 55K views. After Ghana signed a contract with Regnum in September, Russian actors [claimed](#) the deal wasn't viable without external investors, casting doubt on Ghana's ability to fund the project.

ARGENTINA, BUT ONLY AS DEPENDENT



Latin America is also an essential market for emerging nuclear power. In LatAm Russia [collaborating](#) with Brazil, Bolivia, and Mexico, and [seeking](#) to expand its influence in Argentina, Chile, and El Salvador.

Russia's favorable stance toward Argentina's new president, Javier Milei, shifted after Milei's [request](#) to explore NATO partnership and his plan to shut down nuclear facilities. On April 2, six critical Spanish-language reports were [published](#), criticizing Milei's nuclear decision, also echoed in [Russian](#), gaining over 12K views.

In December 2024, Milei announced Argentina's new nuclear program, focusing on modular reactors and becoming a hub for AI companies due to rising energy demands. This triggered Russian backlash: during December Osavul identified five nuclear-related incidents targeting Milei.

The largest incident, on December 11, stemmed from critical remarks by Adriana Serquis, former head of Argentina's National Atomic Energy Commission. Her comments were used in an RT Spanish-language [piece](#), reprinted by 11 websites, and [shared](#) by at least 8 Telegram channels.

On December 13, 14, and 18, additional incidents criticized Milei's plans, raising concerns about technological [dependence](#) on the U.S., the [feasibility](#) of nuclear power in Patagonia, and the [importance](#) of continuing the previous government's nuclear [program](#). These posts gathered over 18K views.

On December 29, Telegram and Twitter accounts [spread](#) claims that Argentina's National Atomic Energy Commission (CNEA) had been hacked, with leaked data allegedly posted on the dark web. According to the messages, the leaked files contained information about "the Argentine SMR CAREM nuclear reactor, other projects, and important information regarding the CNEA." The source of the post on Instagram [commented](#) on the news: "I hope that in a few years, no Artificial Intelligence data centers using a modular nuclear reactor will appear in developed countries." The same user on the X platform frequently [shares](#) pro-Russian content. RedPacket Security [confirmed](#) the leak but noted the absence of download links or images, suggesting it was limited to textual data.

REVENGE FOR THE CZECHS INSTEAD OF CONCLUSION



Russia's loss of the Czech Republic's tender underscores how any collaboration with Rosatom leads to information attacks, even years later.

In 2021, Russia competed with U.S. Westinghouse, China General Nuclear Power, France's EDF, and South Korea's KHNP for the Dukovany power unit tender. However, after links to explosions at the Vrbetice ammunition depot, Czech President Milos Zeman signed a law barring Russian and Chinese companies. Despite this, Russia continued to target the tender from 2021 to 2024, highlighting competitors' flaws and sowing divisions. For example, on July 17, 2024, 11 entities [spread](#) a message claiming South Korea's KHNP won, stating, "Europeans no longer believe in the ability of the French to build nuclear plants."