

Information Circular

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Communication dated 6 August 2020 from the Resident Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan

1. The Secretariat has received a communication dated 6 August 2020 from the Resident Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Agency.
2. At the request of the Resident Representative, the communication is circulated herewith for the information of all Member States.



PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

No. 0332 /16 /20
6 August 2020

H.E. Mr. Rafael Mariano Grossi
Director General
International Atomic Energy Agency

Excellency,

As a follow up to previous communications by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the International Organizations in Vienna, and in response to the last Note of 31 July 2020 by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Armenia, I would like to express my profound regret over repeated attempts by the Permanent Mission of Armenia to misinterpret an explicit clarifications provided in the Note Verbale of No. 0302/16/20 of 23 July 2020 by the Azerbaijani side. With a hope to convincing the Armenian side in an absence of any plans of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan to target civilian objects or infrastructure in Armenia, I wish to reiterate the following two paragraphs, which have been distributed by the IAEA Secretariat to all Member States through the above-mentioned Note:

"The remarks from the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan should be viewed in its proper context of the armed attack of Armenia against Azerbaijan on 12 July 2020 and deliberate targeting by the Armed Forces of this country of the civilian population and civilian objects in the border districts of Azerbaijan, including by using indiscriminately artillery fire, which caused serious damage to the civilian infrastructure, including residential buildings, and resulted in death and injuries among the civilians. According to the media reports the Armenian side considered the Mingachevir Dam in Azerbaijan as military target.

The Office of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan has provided official clarifications that Azerbaijan has never planned attacks on civilian objects. The Republic of Azerbaijan underlines that its Armed Forces never target civilians or civilian infrastructure and use force only against Armenia's military in response to the armed attack in exercise of the right of self-defense in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter."

As for the comments by the officer of Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Azerbaijan provided in response to the question by Trend journalist, I wish to underline that they do not reflect the official position of Azerbaijan, which was made public by the Office of the President of Azerbaijan. Having said that, I consider this matter as closed and deem it irrelevant to comment on the absurd allegations by the Permanent Mission of Armenia both on recent military attack on July 12 and its attempt to lecture international community of the purposes of international agreements related to nuclear security.

In the meantime, I would like to draw again your attention to the issue of substantive nature related to the Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant in Armenia. The Azerbaijani side at various

levels has consistently expressed its serious concerns related to security risks for the region emanating from extending the functioning of this plant for years. These concerns are primarily due to the lack of transparency and failure by Armenia to provide information on its security and safety, including environmental impact assessment procedure in view of the safety improvements and construction works carried out at NPP, which may likely cause significant transboundary impact. There is an absence of reliable certified information about this infrastructure's verifiable comprehensive safety standards compliance, coupled with the reluctance by Armenia to allow the Agency to release whatever information is available about Metsamor safety evaluations. According to the information at our disposal, Armenia's NPP has never been a subject to a Periodic Safety Review (PSR) in full compliance with the IAEA standards. We have repeatedly communicated these concerns to IAEA and expect the Agency to carry out such assessments and release its results, at least to the neighboring states, provided by that Armenia issues a relevant invitation.

I wish to highlight that the plant is one of the oldest NPPs with no emergency containment structure built during the Soviet Union in an area of high seismic activity in 1970s. The fact that the Metsamor NPP is located around 75 km away from the epicenter of the devastating Spitak earthquake of 1988, which resulted in the death of tens of thousands of persons and left a half-million of people on the streets without a home, points out to the dangerous location of this old plant, built using old technology. According to the former USSR State Commission established to investigate the catastrophic impact of this natural catastrophe and address its consequences, the seismologists main conclusions, including the Armenian experts' findings drawn from the destructive earthquake in Spitak, are the faulty reliance on lower seismic activity records and lack of understanding that construction works at the tectonic edges in the north of Armenia should have been carried out with extreme cautiousness and stronger emergency resistance, flawed normative documentation incompliant with seismic-resistant construction, low quality of and insufficient construction materials and unqualified emergency and medical response services. These arguments provided by professional seismologists in the beginning of 90th merit serious considerations by international community since any potential severe earthquake in Metsamor vicinity would substantially affect non-verified structure of the NPP and could endanger lives of millions of people in the entire region.

Azerbaijan, extending its support to the efforts of the Agency to strengthen security and safety of civilian nuclear facilities, calls on Armenia to address together with IAEA the concerns of its neighbors about transparency, safety and security of the Metsamor NPP. As a member of the Board of Governors of the IAEA and its Vice-Chairman, I strongly encourage the Agency and its Member States to persuade Armenia to carry out relevant stress tests based on comprehensive and transparent risk and safety assessments by the IAEA.

I am looking forward to our continued cooperation and would like to assure you of the constructive approach of Azerbaijan in this regard. I request the Secretariat of the IAEA to distribute this letter to all Member States of the Agency.

Sincerely,



Galib Israfilov