

STATEMENT
of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the
Republic of Azerbaijan on potential threat of Metsamor
Nuclear Power Plant for the entire region

We are seriously concerned about the recent discussions in the Armenian Parliament regarding the use of radioactive waste from Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) for military purposes. At a meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Regional Affairs and Eurasian Integration, Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of Armenia, said that the Metsamor NPP generates a significant amount of radioactive waste.

Besides, we are also concerned that Armenia radioactively contaminated our lands, which had been under occupation for about 30 years. According to the head of the Department of the Institute of Geology and Geophysics, of Azerbaijan National Academy of Science, the waste of the Metsamor NPP was buried in the territory of Aghdere town, as well as of Kalbajar district of Azerbaijan.

The expired Metsamor NPP has become an open threat not only to Armenia itself, but also to the entire region. Moreover, it is located in an earthquake-prone area of the South Caucasus, which makes its operation even more dangerous. There are five earthquake tectonic breaks around the NPP, one of the main faults is in only 500 meters from the station.

Thus, all countries of the region are exposed to the threat of suffering the same fate of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant and the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant.

A number of international organizations also stressed their concern about Metsamor NPP. In 2017, Federica Mogherini, the Vice-President of the European Commission stated: *“The EU is fully aware of the risks posed by the Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant (MNPP). Therefore, a swift closure and decommissioning of the MNPP remains a key objective for the EU and the European Neighborhood Policy Action Plan, as this power plant cannot be upgraded to meet internationally recognized nuclear safety standards.”*¹

¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2017-005076-ASW_EN.html?redirect

However, it seems that Armenia is not planning to shut down the plant; on the contrary, its operation has been extended beyond 2026.

Taking into account all the hazards that the Metsamor NPP may cause, I call on all relevant international organizations to take urgent measures for its immediate closure, ensuring the safe suspension of its operation and realization of all stages of radioactive waste management under strict international control in full compliance with the requirements set up by the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management of the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as PACE Resolution 1588 (2007), to prevent disasters like Chernobyl or Fukushima.

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**The Commissioner for Human Rights
(Ombudsman)
of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

January 27, 2021