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Abstract:

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

“Illicit Nuclear Trafficking”

About IAEA

The International Atom Energy Agency is an autonomous international organization within the family of the United Nations bodies. The Agency is headquartered in Vienna, Austria and is the world's center of cooperation in the nuclear field. Set up as "Atoms for Peace" organization in the 1950s, it is aimed at promoting safe, secure and peaceful application of nuclear technologies. The Agency's three main areas of work are safety and security, science and technology, safeguards and verification.

Nuclear Security

The Nuclear Security Plan is of the Agency's main document setting the framework in the field of nuclear security by the Agency's Member States. In cooperation with national governments, regional organizations, Interpol, Europol, World Customs Organization and other specialized agencies and initiatives, the IAEA undertakes joint safety and security missions, develops guidelines and recommendations regarding the issue of nuclear security. Other joint security measures include safety design engineering, physical protection measures, educational programs in the field of nuclear security, as well as specific measures detecting illicit trafficking.

Threat of Nuclear Terrorism

The wave of terrorist attacks in 2000s brought up the issue of possible nuclear terrorism to the international community, where national borders could no longer protect the safety of its people. The range of legal malpractice, which could be conducted by terrorists, begins with possible acquisition of nuclear and radioactive material for building a nuclear bomb or a Radioactive Dispersal Device, i.e dirty bomb. Secondly, terrorists could try to sabotage nuclear power stations, reactors, storage facilities or logistic operations, targeting to spread radioactive contamination into the atmosphere. Important documents and data sources affecting this sphere of IAEA's work are: Activity and Cooperation to Counter Nuclear Smuggling work plan, Nuclear Security Plan, Database on Nuclear Smuggling, Theft and Orphan Radiation Sources.

Illicit Nuclear Trafficking

Nuclear proliferation - that is the major risk that illicit nuclear trafficking can lead to. Since the beginning of 1990s the threat of criminal and unauthorized acts involving nuclear or other radioactive material has grown tremendously. The first incidents of nuclear and radioactive trafficking were detected in 1991, originating from the countries of the collapsed Soviet Union. Since that time the involvement of the organized crime has been a subject of concern, due to large financial & physical resources, widely spread and efficient logistics channels and infrastructure of the groups. The nuclear trafficking incidents of recent years show involvement of drug dealers and traffickers originating from the Black Sea region. This is the most popular route for illicit nuclear trafficking.