



## Preventing radiological threat in the Republic of Azerbaijan

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Azerbaijan is a developing and transit country in the Caucasus, connecting East and West. In addition, Azerbaijan is neighboring countries with pronounced political instability, some of which have extensive nuclear infrastructure or try to develop nuclear infrastructure. Furthermore, in the recent past fundamentalist religious terrorism has taken roots in some of these countries. Therefore, in spite of the fact that the Republic of Azerbaijan has no nuclear facilities or nuclear materials in its own territory, it could be interested for terrorist groups trying to develop a crude radiological dispersal device using radioactive sources that widely used in every day life especially in such areas as oil industry, medicine, agriculture and scientific researches.

The issues of reduction and prevention of both radiological and nuclear terrorism threat are one of the main global challenges around the world. The Republic of Azerbaijan is a part of world community and so we are concerned that radioactive sources used for peaceful applications could be stolen by the terrorist groups and used in the development of radiological dispersal devices sometimes referred to as a "dirty bomb". It is obvious that using highly radioactive materials in radiological dispersal devices could be very disruptive to society, causing panic, environmental contamination, and large financial losses.

One of the ways for reduction and prevention of radiological threat for the countries like Azerbaijan with underdeveloped nuclear security and radiation safety infrastructure is closely participation in the international cooperation programs. As an example of such cooperation, I would like to present the United States Department of Energy's International Radiological Threat Reduction (IRTR) Program. Good progress has made in the field of radiological security within the framework of this programme that was started 2003. Actually, in comparison with any IAEA programs, the progress reached by this programme is more fruitful and visible.