



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

## **Written statement\* submitted by Yakutia - Our Opinion, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[30 January 2021]

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\* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



## **The Russian Federation is not a dump of nuclear waste from all over the world: every country must recycle nuclear waste on its territory**

In 2019 the following problems have worsened in the Russian Federation (Russia):

- Importation of nuclear waste to Russia;
- Construction of the 1, 2 hazard classes waste disposal plants without population consent and in dangerous proximity to places of residence of people.

A critical situation is emerging that threatens life and health of the inhabitants of Russia.

It violates the right to favourable environmental conditions of residence and preservation of physical health guaranteed by Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

In this regard, the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) Yakutia - Our Opinion and Public-ecological movement #StopKambarka are categorically against:

- Importation of nuclear waste from foreign states to the Russian Federation;
- Creation of facilities for handling I and II hazard classes waste without consent of the population and in dangerous proximity to places of residence of people.

These problems are related, since the creation of facilities for management of I and II hazard classes waste without consent of the population has the goal, presumably, not to handle Russia's own waste, but foreign waste imported from outside the country, which is indirectly confirmed by the plans to import 12,000 tons of nuclear waste from Germany into Russia in the period 2019-2022 and the plans of the Russian Government to create 7 facilities for handling I and II hazard classes waste in the period 2019-2023.

In this regard, the Coordinator of the Public-ecological movement #StopKambarka Tagir Kagarmanov made a video statement to the Federal Chancellor of Germany Angela Dorothea Merkel and German people.<sup>1</sup>

We consider it unacceptable that allocation of significant funds from the state budget of Russia in the amount of 5.1 billion rubles (according to the Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 540 dated April 30, 2019) for creation of facilities - sources of radioactive contamination that threaten life and health of Russian citizens with the supposed purpose of disposal of foreign nuclear waste. Russian citizens should not be exposed to mortal danger from foreign nuclear waste. And in the sphere of spending the state budget there are more priority areas - social support, medicine, education and other vital expenses.

We have sent an Appeal to the Prime Minister of Russia Mishustin.<sup>2</sup> The Russian government sent an appeal to Rosatom from which a negative response was received.<sup>3</sup> We also conducted an independent anti-corruption expertise of the Federal Law No. 170-FZ "On the Use of Atomic Energy" dated November 21, 1995.<sup>4</sup> However, the responses were negative.<sup>5</sup>

We give the key points on the problem of importing nuclear waste into Russia (according to the international environmental organization Greenpeace):

1. On import of nuclear waste from Germany by Urenco:
  - In 2019, the import of uranium wastes from Germany to Russia (a by-product of uranium enrichment in the production of fuel for nuclear power plants) was

<sup>1</sup> Video statement available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-0re0jrriyg>.

<sup>2</sup> Appeal available at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qNUmHfFJWXwmhs20D6VDnu8btgqa2ZMc/view>.

<sup>3</sup> Response available at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/14B35xaC5gBvqPX8W2wJVlqW7aUWcOu-m/view?usp=sharing>.

<sup>4</sup> Expertise available at: <http://stepanpetrov.blogspot.com/2020/10/blog-post.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Responses available at: <https://cloud.mail.ru/public/hEWM/TEDErfCQe>, <https://cloud.mail.ru/public/fojP/W2V3i66ve>.

resumed, in particular, the import is carried out by Urenco from the German uranium enrichment plant in Gronau;

- The import of nuclear waste is confirmed by the document of the Government of the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia;<sup>6</sup>
- From 2019 to 2022, it is planned to send to Russia 12,000 tons (more than a thousand containers, about 20 trains) of uranium "tails";
- According to the German federal authorities, from May to October 2019 from Gronau to Joint Stock Company "Ural Electrochemical Plant" in Novouralsk (Sverdlovsk region), six trains of 600 tons each (50 containers) have already been sent;
- Russia has already accumulated about 1 million tons of uranium "tails", all of them are stored in the open air, and the storage sites can be seen on Google maps satellite photos (Novouralsk, Angarsk, Seversk, Zelenogorsk).

2. On inexpediency of importing nuclear waste from foreign states:

- There are no plans to use such a quantity of uranium "tails", and the practice of contracts until 2009 demonstrates that secondary waste after the additional enrichment of uranium "tails" from abroad remained in Russia;
- In accordance with the Federal Law "On the Use of Atomic Energy", nuclear materials and radioactive substances, the further use of which is not provided for, are considered radioactive waste; their import into Russia for storage, processing or disposal is prohibited;
- National waste disposal program in Germany classifies uranium "tails" as radioactive waste if no use is found; in Germany, the last nuclear power plant will be closed in 2021, and the production of uranium from uranium "tails" is considered inexpedient due to the fall in the price of uranium after the accident at the Fukushima nuclear power plant.

3. On protests against the import of nuclear waste:

- As a result of pressure from eco-activists in 2009, Urenco and Rosatom refused to further import radioactive waste from Germany to Russia;
- Environmental activists protest that "Russia should not become a radioactive burial ground for the rest of the world" and demand to immediately stop the import of uranium "tails" to Russia;
- In Germany civil activists and politicians oppose the export of waste to Russia: German environmental organizations declared it irresponsible and contrary to the announced withdrawal from nuclear power; deputies of the Bundestag from the Greens and the Left Party are actively opposed to sending uranium tailings to Russia.

4. On threats to the environment during the storage of nuclear waste:

- The Council for the Development of Civil Society and Human Rights under the President of the Russian Federation touched upon the problem of storing uranium "tails" in Angarsk, having published recommendations following a meeting in the Irkutsk region;
- Annual reports on the activities of Rostekhnadzor (for 2004, 2006-2011) mention the risks of container depressurization when storing uranium "tails" in the open air at the enterprises in Angarsk, Seversk, Novouralsk and Zelenogorsk;

<sup>6</sup> Document available at:  
<https://greenpeace.ru/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Wirtschaftsministerium-NRW-an-GAL-Gronau-12.09.2019-UAA-Gronau.pdf>.

- In August 2019, the media reported that a leak of radionuclides occurred at the enterprise in Novouralsk, which could get into the Neyvo-Rudyansky pond.
5. On main beneficiary and true reasons for import of nuclear waste:
- Rosatom makes money from the disposal of foreign nuclear waste, exposing the inhabitants of Russia to mortal danger;
  - According to environmentalists, Urenco has agreed to import them into Russia, so as not to be responsible for storage in Germany;
  - Removal of radioactive waste to “third countries” is a cynical and immoral business, built on the desire to save billions of euros on the disposal of their uranium “tails”.

NGO Yakutia – Our Opinion and Public-ecological movement #StopKambarka require:

1. To cancel the decision of the Government of the Russian Federation on the construction of a technical complex for processing and disposal of I and II hazard classes waste "Kambarka" in the Udmurt Republic;
2. To stop importing nuclear waste from foreign states into the Russian Federation;
3. To create conditions for the free expression of will and holding of referendums on the construction of facilities for handling I and II hazard classes waste, including not hindering the holding of referenda;
4. To provide a rationale for the planned volumes of capacity utilization of 7 facilities for handling I and II hazard classes waste created in accordance with the Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 540 dated April 30, 2019,<sup>7</sup> as well as information on the origin of waste planned for processing (from which country and enterprises);
5. To ensure changes in the law enforcement practice and legislation of Russia based on the implementation of the following guidelines for the disposal of nuclear waste:
  - a) Each country should dispose of nuclear waste on its territory;
  - b) Russia must utilize only its own nuclear waste on its territory;
  - c) Objects for handling I and II hazard classes waste should be built, mainly, in areas remote from places of residence of people;
  - d) The population of Russia's regions where it is planned to build facilities for handling I and II hazard classes waste should have the opportunity to freely express their will and hold a referendum on this issue;
  - e) In case of disagreement of the population, obtained as a result of the referendum, the decisions on the construction of a facility for handling I and II hazard classes waste shall be cancelled.

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Public-ecological movement #StopKambarka, an NGO without consultative status, also shares the views expressed in this statement.

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<sup>7</sup> Decree available at:  
<http://static.government.ru/media/files/4iPD1yaHaCR94huJFxpnbneAAVFVCfeD.pdf>.