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Analysis of Incidents Reported during 2007-2012 to the IAEA's Incident and Trafficking Database

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An analysis of incidents reported by States to the Incident and Trafficking Database (ITDB) during 2007-2012 has recently been completed by the IAEA's Division of Nuclear Security. During this period, over 1200 incidents –approximately half of incidents reported to the ITDB since its establishment in 1995 - were reported to the ITDB. Approximately 50% of these incidents involved radioactive sources, 35% involved radioactively contaminated material, 10% involved nuclear material and the remainder comprised mostly scams. About 20% of the total incidents involved unauthorized possession of nuclear and other radioactive material and related criminal activities (including theft, sales, movement, transactions and attempts thereof) –several of which involved criminal groups in possession of gram-level amounts of high enriched uranium (HEU) and plutonium (as plutonium-beryllium neutron sources) and raise the possibility that more such material may still be out of regulatory control. The analysis also draws attention to the detection of many incidents at international borders, and highlights the growth in incidents that involve other radioactive material, particularly radioactively contaminated material. Regional variations in the frequency of reporting were also noted. It was further noted that States may benefit from measures that enhance their capabilities in nuclear forensics as a tool for providing hints on possible originating facilities (or for excluding facilities) of nuclear or other radioactive material.

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