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Developing a Nuclear Forensics library in Ukraine: Legislation, Interaction and Regional Cooperation

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The threat of terrorist activities involving nuclear materials has now become a matter of international community concern. Ukraine has been actively involved into the international activities related to combating illicit trafficking of NRM and communicates with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Incident and Trafficking Database (ITDB) since 1997. Much can be learned from analysis of reported cases: Where did material originate? Where a regulatory control was lost or weakens? What is the route the interdicted material took? These and other questions can be answered through detailed technical characterization of the stolen/lost material. The scientific methods used for this purpose are normally referred to as nuclear forensics now became a powerful tool to further strengthening of regulatory control.

In June 2003 the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted Decree N 813 which determines the interaction state and local authorities in case of detection radioactive materials out of regulatory control (illicit trafficking). Nuclear forensics analysis is more than the characterization of the material, which is simply a determination of the physical nature of the sample. For the final attribution and interpretation of the evidences and material properties, it also requires an involvement of knowledge and expertise from the broad scientific, forensic and nuclear technology related areas. The authorized main expert nuclear forensic laboratory was established in the Institute for Nuclear Research (INR) of National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine based on the core technical capabilities and expertise available in the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.

Now, in the frame of STCU's Partner project P459, in INR the pilot project of database for nuclear forensics in Ukraine is developing. However, it should be noted that the development of nuclear forensics capabilities at national level not excludes the development of international networks of experts involved into the nuclear forensics investigations, especial at the regional level. The co-operation and information exchange in the nuclear forensics field the establishing of a regional nuclear forensic network encompassing national expert laboratories in Georgia, Moldova and Azerbaijan with central regional nuclear forensic expert laboratory in Ukraine would be powerful tools for improvement regional and international nuclear security regime. This activity should include development both technical and methodological capabilities and include the development of protocols and signing of an agreement for samples and data exchange, joint trainings and experts investigations, development of general information platform for cooperation. For this purpose, it is planed to create communication-informational portals on the base of Ukrainian laboratory, that providing technical means for the quick information and data exchange, efficient co-ordination of joint nuclear forensic studies, trainings, consultations etc.

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