

Environmental Radiological Monitoring and Decommissioning and Remediation of Uranium Mine Sites of Arlit, Niger

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Abstract:

The uranium production began in Niger with Société des Mines de l'Air (SOMAIR) in 1971, then the Compagnie Minière d'Akouta (COMINAK) in 1978. At this time, there are no laws, regulations and guidance regarding radioactive waste management, health, safety, environmental protection, decommissioning and remediation. This situation leads to the storage of several million tons of radioactive residues and waste rocks from uranium mining and milling in open air near the mining cities of Arlit and Akokan. The presence of these potential contamination sources can have negative impacts on people and the environment.

Currently COMINAK uranium mine is under decommissioning and remediation phase.

In addition of these two companies, there are la Société des Mines (d'Azelik) SOMINA and IMOURAREN which started mining in 2008 and 2009 respectively, but they are currently shut down. Two new uranium mining licenses were also granted in 2016 and 2020 respectively to the Compagnie Minière de Madaoula (COMIMA) and la Société des Mines de Dasa (SOMIDA) which is in the phase of development.

In recent years, Niger has put in place a legislative and regulatory framework to regulate mining in general and uranium mining in particular.

Keys words: waste rocks, residues, contamination sources, decommissioning and remediation,