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**EXPERT: EXTERNAL IMPACT ON METSAMOR NPP MAY RESULT IN DEATH OF HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF ARMENIANS**

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07.06.2017

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6 June 2017

APA

An external impact on the Metsamor nuclear power plant (NPP) may result in the death of hundreds of thousands of Armenians, first-degree retired captain Hijran Rustamzade, an expert on radiological and chemical security who worked as head of chemical service for the Azerbaijani Armed Forces in 1992-2013, told APA.

He was commenting on an article by an Armenian expert on the Metsamor nuke plant (<http://bit.ly/2szA2XD>).

Rustamzade noted that Armenias current leadership has made statements that the Armenian army can strike strategic facilities, including the Mingachevir reservoir, found on Azerbaijani territory.

Such groundless claims are solely meant for the naive population. Azerbaijan's air space, especially over the Mingachevir reservoir, is protected with advanced air defense equipment. The materials used for the construction of the reservoir, its capacity and other features ensure its safety from outside impacts, said the expert.

The threats voiced by Armenia that it can use Iskandar missiles against Azerbaijan give grounds to official Baku to decide on shooting down the enemys strategic facilities. Although Azerbaijan several times stated that it doesnt target the enemys non-military facilities, accidental falling of a missile on the Nuclear Power Plant, in consideration of favorable weather condition, can lead to destruction of its nuclear reactor and spread of radioactive waste around.

The radioactive dust caused by failure of the Nuclear Power Plant will directly expose surrounding cities and settlements to radioactive contamination. Taking into account the topography of the territory, it can be assumed that the radioactive zone will cover only Armenia, about 50 thousand people will die from poisoning and living will be limited in this space in the next 150 years.

It is not excluded that as a result of any accident, 25000-30000 people will suffer and die in densely populated cities of Yerevan, Echmiadzin and Armavir within an hour. Ararat, Razdan, Vanadzor, Spitak cities will be strongly affected by radiation over the next 2-4 hours, and Stepanavan, Alaverdi, Ijevan and Vardenis cities over the next 4-6 hours being surrounded by contamination zones. Due to expansion of radiation zones over the next few days, the number of people affected by radiation will reach up to nearly 40,000-50,000, he said.

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Kaynak/Source: