Central Asia: political transition and environmental risks



Nuclear legacies

- Nuclear power station (NPS)
- Nuclear powerplant closed or under construction
- Nuclear industry and research site (civil and military). Fuel production or recycling
- Radioactive waste site associated with uranium mines (active or closed) and other hazardous waste storage piles and ponds
- Nuclear weapons test site. Large areas contaminated with radioactive fallout
- Russian regions specialized in civil and military nuclear industries. Former relationship with Central Asian nuclear facilities.

Soviet legacy management

Aral Sea and Surrounding Region

Diversion of rivers feeding the Aral Sea led to exposure of seabed to open air, allowing airborne transport of salts and heavy metals in a perimeter of 600 - 800 km. Desertification and salinization of arable land, resulting in the collapse of fisheries and agriculture, impoverishment, and outward migration.

Ferghana Valley

Densely populated, ethnically diverse region with severely degraded forests and soils, limited rule of law, and widespread traffic in contraband merchandise. Lack of energy sources and supply and polluted waters. Region under the threat of collapse of radioactive and chemical waste tailing ponds.

Water-related tensions:

Conflicts over distribution of water between upstream and downstream countries. High economic dependence on irrigated agriculture (rice and cotton), with steadily deteriorating soils.

Mines in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and South Kazakhstan

Presence of poorly-maintained radioactive and chemical waste sites in seismically active zone, located near highly populated areas and important surface water

North-East Kazakhstan: Tselinyy-Pavlodar-Semei-Oksemen and Aktau on the Caspian Sea coast

Area contaminated with radioactive fallout from experimental nuclear explosions and inadequate waste storage. High mortality rate compared to Central Asian average.

THE MAP DOES NOT IMPLY THE EXPRESSION OF ANY OPINION ON THE PART OF THE AGENCIES CONCERNING THE LEGAL STATUS OF ANY COUNTRY, TERRITORY, CITY OR AREA OF ITS AUTHORITY, OR DELINEATION OF ITS FRONTIERS AND BOUNDARIES.

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