

Report on the insufficient effectiveness of the decontamination work carried out in the villages of the Polessiya district

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Secret

Regarding the situation in the Polessyie district of the Kiev region

The KGB Directorate of the Ukrainian SSR for the city of Kiev and the Kiev region is taking measures to ensure reliable monitoring of the situation related to decontamination work in the northern districts of the Kiev region, with the aim of promptly identifying the preconditions for mass adverse events and emergency situations.

During the course of undercover operations, data was obtained indicating the insufficient effectiveness of decontamination work carried out in the villages of the Polesie district.

According to the district sanitary and epidemiological station, the radiation situation has not changed significantly since 1988; gamma radiation levels in populated areas remain high (from 0.5 to 7.5 $\mu\text{Sv/hr}$). Radionuclide concentrations in some agricultural products and feed exceed the temporarily permissible levels (VDU-88).

To reduce the absorbed dose among the district's population, decontamination work has been carried out since 1986 by military personnel from the 25th Chemical Protection Brigade of the Kiev Military District and workers from construction organisations of the Oblremstroy Trust.

The decontamination method recommended by the USSR State Agro-Industrial Committee involves replacing roofs, fences, and topsoil, as well as planting forests on the most contaminated soil areas. The scope of work is determined based on data provided by the regional executive committee of people's deputies.

According to experts in the field, the main reasons for the low effectiveness of decontamination work are a large area and high density of radioactive contamination in the Polessyie (Kiev Oblast), Narodichi (Zhytomyr Oblast), and Narovlya (Belarusian SSR) districts, as well as the north-western part of the 30-kilometer zone of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant.

In the Polessyie district alone:

- 33,300 hectares contaminated with up to 555,000,000,000 Bq/km² [0.555 TBq/km²];
- 10,200 hectares contaminated with 555,000,000,000 to 1,480,000,000,000 Bq/km² [0.555-1.480 TBq/km²];
- 33,600 hectares contaminated with 1,480,000,000,000 to 2,960,000,000,000 Bq/km² [1.48-2.96 TBq/km²];
- 6,200 hectares contaminated with over 2,960,000,000,000 Bq/km² [2.96 TBq/km²];
- wind migration of radionuclides, due to the predominance of south-westerly winds, which does not exclude the possibility of contamination of the decontaminated area;

- local, rather than large-scale, decontamination work, carried out only in the district's villages (Poleskoye, Vilcha, Dibrova, Maksimovichi, etc.), without localising other contaminated areas, including agricultural land;
- thin (up to 10 centimetres) thickness of the removed contaminated soil, without studying the diffusion of radionuclides into the subsoil;
- the unsatisfactory condition of the "burial grounds" (Tarasy-Poleskoye, etc.), where decontamination waste (slate, boards, contaminated soil, etc.) is dumped, the absence of "radioactivity" signs, as well as a specific organisation in the Poleskoye district that would be responsible for the burial sites;
- insufficient promptness in implementing the decision of the standing emergency commission under the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR (Protocol No. 5 of 08.04.1989) on the evacuation of residents of the villages of Yasen and Shevchenkovo from the Polesie district, as well as orders of the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR 4125/24 of 27.04.89 and Government Commission No. 8 of 06.06.89 on the allocation of equipment from other regions of Ukraine (excavators, bulldozers, etc.) for decontamination needs, which significantly reduces the effectiveness of the measures taken.

These and other issues were repeatedly discussed at joint meetings of the district's Soviet-Party bodies with representatives of the military, civil defence, and research institutes, which to some extent contributed to their resolution.

Furthermore, due to a lack of proper information about the need for decontamination work, various rumours and speculation about dangerous radiation levels have arisen among residents of the district, negatively affecting their mood and productivity.

Another equally important issue today is the lack of medical care for the population of the Polesie district. According to available operational data, the incidence of endocrine, cardiovascular, respiratory, oncological, and some other diseases has increased. However, as of July 1, 1989, of the 670 medical personnel required by the staff, more than 70 positions were unstaffed, namely:

- physician positions: 36 positions unstaffed (the required staffing level is 129);
- mid-level personnel positions: 40 positions unstaffed (the required staffing level is 359).

Insufficient attention is paid to summer recreation for children living in the district. Compared to 1986–1988, this summer, children are sent to pioneer camps for only one month. They spend the rest of the time at home, which causes parents to worry about their health.

These and other factors are not helping to reduce moral and psychological tension among the district's population. According to available data, the flow of letters to various authorities and the press continues unabated.

Various rumours are circulating at businesses and organisations, potentially developing into sources of social unrest.

We are taking additional measures to strengthen control of the situation.

The Kiev Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine has been informed.

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