

Radiation Defense Exercises Scheduled for Tehran

OE Watch Commentary: Suspicions regarding Iran’s nuclear program remain strong. Regardless of the status of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the 2015 nuclear deal, Iran’s participation in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty mandates continued International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) monitoring and inspection. While the JCPOA focuses specifically on the military dimension of Iran’s nuclear program as well as enrichment, which it allows Iran to continue under specific constraints, Iran’s nuclear work is broader. Much of Iran’s nuclear program is housed in universities or military facilities in or near Iran’s largest cities—Tehran and Isfahan. In addition, the Iranian government has openly considered expanding the numbers of nuclear power plants, some of which may also be built near the Iranian capital.

The sheer scale of Iran’s nuclear work combined with the fact that multiple faults transect Iran and nearly the entire country is susceptible to devastating earthquakes, makes crisis management imperative. So too do past incidents: In 2011, a fire and explosion in Isfahan reportedly damaged a nuclear facility and led to the release of some radiation.



Tehran, looking north toward the Alburz Mountains.

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The accompanying passage from *Fars News* reports that the country will be holding radiation exercises starting around 23 October - 21 November, with the goals of “practicing and testing the level of readiness of radiation-incident devices...” and “eliminating radiation leakage pollution, testing and evaluating systems and equipment, [practicing] the transfer of populations to a safe area, and specialized training for the people.” That the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), of which the Passive Defense Organization is part, would take the lead on such drills makes sense given the paramount role the IRGC plays in all aspects of Iran’s security. It also likely suggests the reluctance of the IRGC to share information outside the organization with regard to certain aspects of Iran’s nuclear program. That the Iranian press would begin announcing such drills four months in advance is likely meant to allay popular panic given both the size of cities like Tehran (whose population exceeds eight million, and whose broader urban area has a population nearly twice that) and the widespread distrust ordinary Iranians feel for their government given past disaster mismanagement. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**

“The purpose of the Tehran radiation exercise [is] crisis and asset management after any incident.”

Source: “Razmayesh Pedafand Pertavi Tehran Aban Mah Sal Jari Bargozar Mishavad (Radiation Defense Exercises Will Be Held in Tehran in October-November),” *Fars News Agency*, 21 June 2019. <https://www.farsnews.com/news/13980321001164>

Radiation Exercises Will be Held in Tehran

A spokesperson for the Passive Defense Organization said that radiation tests will start in Iran in [the Persian month] Aban [October 23-November 21] of this year, with the coordination of Ali Asghar Zarei, the acting head of the Passive Defense Organization; Foroughizadeh, the deputy commander of the Radiation Defense Headquarters; Commander Saberi, head of Tehran’s division of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Radvan, the director general of Tehran’s branch of the Passive Defense Organization.

Zarei, the acting head of the Passive Defense Organization, said that the purpose of the Tehran radiation exercise was crisis and asset management after any incident. He continued: “In these tests, we are practicing and testing the level of readiness of radiation-incident devices in every unit. We are working on the elimination of radiation leakage pollution, testing and evaluating systems and equipment, the transfer of populations to a safe area, and specialized training for the people.”

The test is planned for Aban of this year under the guidance of the acting head of the Passive Defense Organization and the Radiation Defense Organization in Tehran.

In a statement, Foroughizadeh, the head of the Radiation Defense Organization, stated the importance of confronting the threat head-on: Conducting and practicing radiation exercises is very important. We must prepare for these eventualities by practicing and conducting annual exercises. Every year, a comprehensive radiation campaign must be hosted. Its strengths and weaknesses should be assessed, and necessary measures should be taken to address the deficiencies. General Saberi, the deputy commander of the Tehran Revolutionary Guards Corps, also announced that he was preparing to conduct an exercise in Aban this year.