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### **France – Military nuclear waste is buried in opacity**

On Wednesday, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons called for more transparency on the nuclear weapons used by France and their place of storage after use. France has a nuclear arsenal.

Waste from the military nuclear industry in France is absent from public debate, protected by unjustified secrecy and clouded by imprecise or even inaccurate figures, denounces the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) on Wednesday.

“It is essential to put an end to the derogatory regime from which military activities and installations benefit in terms of the health and environmental consequences they generate” estimates in a new report ICAN France, hexagonal relay of the organization recipient of the Nobel Prize of the peace in 2017.

“Only aspects related to the manufacture of warheads must remain secret to avoid any risk of technological proliferation, which is not the case with everything relating to the control and transparency of nuclear safety and radiation protection”, according to The report.

#### **Far from reality**

The National Agency for the Management of Radioactive Waste (Andra) estimates the share of military nuclear waste in France in the overall stock at 9%, or 148,630 cubic meters.

“But these figures are far from reflecting the reality of the tens of thousands of cubic meters of waste, with a more or less long life and at more or less high activity, generated since the launch of the military nuclear program in the early 1950s”, denounces the study.

France has a nuclear arsenal currently composed of 290 thermonuclear warheads, according to this document. Andra also reports, in its latest figures from 2018, 70 military sites for radioactive materials and waste. But ICAN argues that more waste will be added to it.

The production of nuclear waste by France for its policy of nuclear deterrence “will continue and could represent, in 2100, an astronomical volume of 259,762 cubic meters, or about 87 Olympic swimming pools”, according to the report.

#### **“Start a big debate”**

The organization is also surprised that the fuel for naval propulsion, used by the fleet of French submarines and the aircraft carrier Charles-de-Gaulle, is classified by Andra as “spent fuel” and not as nuclear waste. It warns against certain dangerous sites, including Cherbourg (west) which “hosts 7 nuclear reactors awaiting total dismantling and by 2050, will accommodate 11 new nuclear reactors (700 tonnes per unit)”.

ICAN regrets that “the absence of public data does not allow to establish even a coherent estimate” of the volumes of waste to come. “It is time to launch a major public debate (...) to debate the financial choices and models on French nuclear power”, writes for her part in the foreword Émilie Cariou, Member of Parliament (not registered), member of the Finance Committee and of the Parliamentary Office for the Evaluation of Scientific and Technological Choices.

“The question was legitimately asked about thirty years ago, it still arises today. It is time to answer them, we owe it to our fellow citizens as well as to future generations,” she adds.