

- **Petition L-10/2005 by Suitupe Kiritome (Kiribatian), on Britain's alleged failure to implement provisions of Directive 96/29 EURATOM in relation to survivors of the indigenous population of Christmas Island affected by nuclear tests conducted in 1957 and 1958**

The petitioner, represented by a lawyer, refers to nuclear tests conducted by Britain during 1957 and 1958 at Christmas Island in the South Pacific, which formed part of a UK colony until 1979. The tests are said to have posed a high risk to the civilian population. Around 300 islanders, among them the petitioner, were allegedly contaminated with radiation during the experimental detonations. As a consequence of the radiation exposure, the petitioner suffered permanent skin damage which could lead to the development of cancer. The petitioner claims that the UK government at the time was fully aware of the risks associated with the nuclear tests, basing her allegations on official reports and internal government documents from the 1950s, of which copies are attached to the petition. In one of these documents, it was proposed to set up a 400 mile danger zone around the island. The radiation dose levels used to define the area were recognised in this document as being "15 times higher than that permitted by the International Commission on Radiological Protection". Despite the officially recognised risks to the indigenous population at Christmas Island, no attempt was made by Britain to evacuate the people to a safe place, according to the petitioner. The petitioner refers to requirements of Council Directive 96/62 EURATOM, which she claims Britain has not implemented with regard to the survivors of the abovementioned nuclear tests. In particular, Britain has failed to classify them as reference group, to assess the radiation dosage they were exposed to and to monitor the health effects, according to her. She cites ECJ case law in support of her view that the provisions of the Directive apply to the future effects of situations, which arose in the past and emphasises that at the time of the UK's accession to the EURATOM Treaty, Christmas Island was a territory under British jurisdiction. The petitioner demands that Britain enforces the Directive's health and safety requirements to ensure the early detection and treatment of radiation induced cancers and illnesses by regular monitoring.

Information

- Petition 720/2002 raises similar problems with regard to radiation exposure of workers in Greenland.

Recommendations

- declare admissible;
- ask the Commission for information;
- request information from the British Government