

Hungary likely source of elevated radioactivity levels: IAEA

November 17 2011



Hungarian engineers watch the control-screen at the National Radioactive Waste Depository in Bataapati, about 200km south of Budapest, in 2008. Elevated levels of the radioactive element iodine-131 that were detected in several nations have been identified as likely originating at a Hungarian research institute, nuclear authorities said Thursday.

Elevated levels of the radioactive element iodine-131 that were detected in several nations have been identified as likely originating at a Hungarian research institute, nuclear authorities said Thursday.

Hungarian officials said the leak probably came from the Budapest-based Institute of Isotopes, the [International Atomic Energy Agency](#) said in a statement.

The institute has acknowledged emitting higher quantities of [iodine-131](#)

than normal but denies being the source of any elevated radiation.

"[Radiation levels](#) in Hungary were only a little higher in Budapest than elsewhere," said Institute of Isotopes director Mihaly Lakatos.

"If the source of heightened radioactivity had been Budapest, the levels measured here should have been much higher."

On November 11, several countries including Poland, Slovakia, Austria, Hungary and the Czech republic warned the IAEA that they had detected an increase in iodine-131.

France's nuclear watchdog also reported on November 15 that very small concentrations of iodine 131 had been detected in the air.

The international agency said the levels detected were low and that there was no risk to human health.

Officials said the amount of the radioactive element released was equivalent to 0.01 microsieverts. The average person is exposed to 2,400 microsieverts annually through [background radiation](#).

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