

## Koshkar-Ata tailing, East Caspian Sea



View of Koshkar-Ata, 5 Nov 2005



The Koshkar-Ata tailing pond (surface area 77 sq.km) is located in a natural depression without exit and contains 400 million tonnes of radioactive and toxic waste, including 105 million tonnes of uranium mill tailings with radiation contents 11242 K. Currently, 55% of the tailings surface is covered with water. It is, however, estimated that the complete pond will dry out within 5-6 years. High levels of heavy metals, rare earth elements, and radionuclides are found in the tailing. Groundwater contamination is identified as the major environmental issue, with potential to contaminate the Caspian Sea (located 7 km away). Regular strong winds at 8-10 m/s disperse pollutants over the territory, including Aktau city.