

Statement by non-governmental organizations and experts on the ongoing processes around Namakhvani HPP

The ongoing process related to the construction of Namakhvani HPP, with the inefficient handling of the situation, is becoming increasingly polarized and intensifies national security risks. This in turn strengthens the country's ill-disposed forces, those interested in aggravating internal dispute, discrediting institutions and professionals, diminishing the country economically, increasing its energy dependence on foreign countries, and weakening political ties.

We sympathize with the sincere efforts of the protesters to protect the local environment and the interests of the population. We believe that the decision should be made not unilaterally, in favor of either party, but rather jointly, taking into account the interests of the country and its citizens. We are convinced that **further escalation of the process by using force and the continuation of the project, or its forcible termination, could lead to existential, irreparable damage to the country.** Unfortunately, the course of the events does not give much hope for the avoidance of this damage. Therefore:

- We call on the government agencies and the investor, as well as protesters, to consider the existing threats and make every effort to defuse the situation. We have to start an informed and pragmatic dialogue in full transparency in order to end the confrontation, that is beneficial for adversary forces and instead start working mutually, in favor of our country. Under proper civic responsibility, constructive work is possible.
- We address the experts in the related fields and active members of the society, with knowledge, experience, and authority to promote the substantive dialogue between the parties.
- We call on the fellow NGOs, to help defuse the situation and establish a substantive dialogue between the parties where possible, through objective and unbiased information and assessments.
- We call on the government, to create a feasible platform for constructive dialogue with the involvement of the stakeholders and to ensure the sustainability of the process.

The following practical steps must be taken:

- The purpose, procedures, and rules of the dialogue must first be developed and agreed upon by the parties, ensuring the transparency and effectiveness of the process.
- The key and substantive questions regarding the project contract including its utility, threats, procedures, and other issues, should be established and complied with, by all parties. Legitimate questions should be identified and separated from false information. The state and the investor should provide and substantive answers to these questions and improve the identified shortcomings.
- Along with the parties, independent experts must be actively involved in the process. They should develop qualified conclusions, assessments, and recommendations to the parties, within their areas of competence.
- During the review period, a full moratorium on the construction of the HPP must be announced and at the same time, the protest should be halted. The involved parties need to avoid politicizing the process and thus hindering substantive discussion.

The current situation, along with colossal threats, includes also the possibility for the country to introduce civilized dialogue, transparency and reduce the threats of corrupt and unqualified decisions; Increase

strategic capabilities and progress towards energy, economic and political empowerment. Passivity and the failure to use this opportunity would be irreparable mistakes.

World experience for Georgia

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Association "Atinati"

ABCO-Georgia

Human Rights Center

Association "Dea"

Strategic Communications Center - Georgia

A (A) IP "Child, Family, Society"

E-Government Georgia

International Center for Geopolitical Studies

Association Tolerant

Georgian Civic Development Association

IDP Women's Association "Consent"

Georgian Tea Producers Association

Association "Peaceful and Business Caucasus"

Georgian International Development Agency

Fund "Sukhumi"

A new generation for a democratic Georgia

Georgian Center for Strategic Research and Development

Student-Youth Council

Civil Forum

The center is empathy

Association of Women and Business

Association Droni

Farmers' Rights Association

JA Georgia

Society for the Promotion of Harmonious Human Development

Note: The list of signatories in the document has been updated