



## Journalistic Investigation – Gombori Road Millions

27.01.2011



*Tea Topuria, Kakheti Information Center*

**Vaziani-Gombori-Telavi rehabilitated road was opened up on October 2nd of 2010 by the President of Georgia. 37 million dollars were spent on the rehabilitation, 30 out of which is a loan from the World Bank. The Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure Ramaz Nikolaishvili “gave warrant” to President at the opening that the corresponding road would not have problem for 10 years. “Before they would intentionally do poor job to take**

**money as though needing for repairs,” – stated President. Gombori road collapsed in two months after the opening.**

The decision on the restoration of Vaziani-Gombori-Telavi road was made by Georgian government in 2008. The corresponding road is 45 km. shorter than Tbilisi-Bakurtsikhe-Gurjaani-Telavi road. The government explained the necessity of road restoration by the need of tourism development and helping Kakheti peasants. The World Bank considered the project to be economically profitable and emitted 30 million US dollars loan to Georgian government. This money, along with its percentages needs to be covered in 20 years period.

### October 2nd

On October 2nd, Georgian national TV companies broadcast numerous reportages on the opening up of Vaziani-Gombori-Telavi rehabilitated road.

“President arrived in Telavi from Tbilisi exactly by this road. He was satisfied with the implemented works. From now on it is possible to arrive in Telavi from Tbilisi in a time period less by an hour. Two new bridges were built on the corresponding road, four were reconstructed. According to President, this road has been closed for years and it is very important that the narrow and dangerous road has been drastically widened,” – state the hosts of information programs.

“When Gia Arsenishvili was participating in the elections, he promised Kakheti residents to restore this road. Gia was a Governor here and we really love him. His main pre-election promise was constructing the road. I want everyone to remember – we always fulfill our requests, our deputies always do. Mr. Gia always reminded me of this. I would have been embarrassed to meet him if this road was not completed. This is what it means when the government, deputies, local government and different departments are working together. Promises are fulfilled this way. I want to thank Mr. Gia and all of you,” – noted Mikheil Saakashvili.

On the same day, the Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure Ramaz Nikolaishvili promised President that the rehabilitation works were of such a high value that the road would not have any problem for 10 years.

**Ramaz Nikolaishvili:** “The road has been fixed and there will not be any problem. That means that if we pay once in every 8 years for the rehabilitation, Mr. President I will guarantee you that this road will not have any problem for 10 years.”

**Mikheil Saakashvili:** “What was it like before? They would intentionally do bad job and then take money as though needing for repairs. Why we always had bad roads? Because they would steal money, do little and every year we had bad road.”

### In Two Months after the Presentation

In less than two months since the opening the road crocked.

**Madona Batiashvili, the correspondent of Kakheti Information Center:** “On November 12th, by the request of kakheti Information Center editor, we were sent to Gombori valley villages to prepare photo reportage. Kakheti Information Center is implementing a project by the support of Open Society Georgia in the frameworks of which we are preparing photo reportages. I arrived late in the village Ujarma. The newly rehabilitated road was already damaged. Asphalt was cracked and damaged, the sides broken. Several places were damaged by the landslide. I was met by the workmen who were fixing the damaged road. They told me that this road was in the landslide risk zone and that is why it gets damaged.”

According to specialists, the asphalt cover should needs to be 7-12 cm thick in order to endure the pressure. While conducting the journalistic investigation in the several damaged parts of Vaziani-Gombori-Telavi road our correspondents measured the thickness of asphalt cover which

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### POLL

**How do you think, did the political prisoners, released by the Parliament of Georgia short time ago, deserve freedom?**

They deserved freedom

They did not deserve freedom

Only part of them deserved freedom

turned out to be 3-4 cm.

The road is cracked and deformed. There are places where the asphalt is paved twice. Besides, there is no spot to park the car that can create dangerous situation.

The dam strengthening works are still underway on the damaged road.

**Demur Metreveli, road constructor:** "We are conducting dam strengthening works and building the gabion. The Ministry invited us to do it on four different places."

On the question why the rehabilitated road was damaged so fast, the deputy head of Road Department of the Regional Development and Infrastructure Ministry Nugzar Gasviani stated: "There are landslide risk zones in the corresponding roads. They get activated periodically causing the deformation of the pathway. The Road Department systematically eradicates them."

**Soso Melitauri, World Bank representatives:** "We were not going to pave asphalt in this path in the beginning as there is a landslide danger. It is possible to construct bridge or tunnel but such expenses are not advisable. Thus, we chose asphalt. It should be fixed as many times as it gets damaged. There is no other way out."

According to Davit Chipashvili, representative of NGO Green Alternative the landslide formed on this road cannot be fixed. "It will always damage the road and must be periodically fixed," – notes Chipashvili.

Several paths of rehabilitated road (approximately 500 meter) really fall in the landslide risk zone, but the road is damaged in the places where there is no landslide as well.

"They paved the asphalt and started doing things due to haste of opening up the road. Gombori road was constructed in an expedited pace. As I am informed the rehabilitation of Gombori road should have been completed for the next year but according to the order of superior bodies, the construction was hastened to complete it for vintage. Such a hurried pace sometimes causes shortcomings in the technological processes and organizational quality," – noted the specialist of road construction Davit Burduladze on Maestro TV live.

In the project provided by World Bank the term of construction was named to be a completely different period. According to the project, the works should have been started in November of 2009 and end in 2013. If we look at the list of works, this term is rather logical: researches, transformation of electricity and other buildings, rehabilitation of bridges, land strengthening and the list of other works is rather long.

The fact that the President of Georgia opened up the unfinished road is confirmed by #312 decree of government issued on October 13 of 2010. According to the corresponding decree signed by the Prime Minister Nikoloz Gilauri, - the construction of 28th and 54th paths of Vaziani-Gombori-Telavi highway – 78480.7 sq. meter land in the forest districts of Kakheti Forest Agency and Sagarejo Forest district was excluded from state forest fund.

Serious violations were observed in connection with Vaziani-Gombori-Telavi before starting the road rehabilitation.

#### First Violation – Partial Tender

In 2008 tender commission conducted tender (purchase of service for preparation of technical-economic argumentation for construction and rehabilitation works, evaluation of environmental influence and author's supervision). According to the law, the tender is conducted in order to select the best company. But in this case it did not happen. Tender was conducted in two different stages. At the first stage Commission did not establish the criteria for evaluation of claimants nor did it establish the priority coefficients. Coming in contradiction with the law requirements, tender commission determined this data only at the second stage of the tender.

"The thing is that exactly these indicators fulfill one of the main roles for determining the winner. The violation of procedures might gravely affect the result of tender. At the very beginning the qualification requests are introduced to Tender Commission, thus it has chance to evaluate the data of companies according to these criteria. The preliminary knowledge of the corresponding information gives Commission a chance to determine the priorities according to which the claimant winner is ascertained. By violating the law requirements the Tender Commission created a direct possibility for partiality," – states lawyer Tatuli Todua from Young Lawyers Association who is conducting monitoring on Vaziani-Gombori-Telavi road rehabilitation.

Ultimately, this tender selected company "Transproject." It should be noted that the director of this company Tali Taliashvili was detained by the Revenue Service in 2007. Along with others she was charged with the artificial increase of work load and appropriation of 2 million GEL.

#### Second Violation – 10 km Road Path Included in Two Different Projects

The Road Department was commissioned with preparation of Vaziani-Gombori-Telavi road construction. Besides, the decree indicates that the road paths which do not need the construction works should be just fixed.

According to the decree, for periodical fixing of 58th and 67.4th km paths, the Road Department announced a tender for purchase of periodical fixing works of the path. As a result of the tender, the 10 meter path to be fixed by LLC Mtkvari was included now in the second project.

**Tatuli Todua, lawyer:** "At the end of June of 2008, the Road Department almost simultaneously announced two tenders and this 19 km path was found to be the purchase object of both

I do not know

VOTE

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tenders.”

### Third Violation – Additional 300 Thousand GEL

While conducting the tender (purchase of service for preparation of technical-economic argumentation for construction and rehabilitation works, evaluation of environmental influence and author's supervision), Tender Commission revealed the winner with 1 944 640 GEL tender offer. But the plan did not envisage so much money. According to 2009 state purchase plan, the Road Department could pay only 1 649 400 GEL. GYLA lawyer Tatuli Todua explains: “In this case, according to article 21, part II, paragraph B of decree on the Modality of State Purchase Implementation, the Road Department was obligated to complete the Tender with negative outcome.”

Road Department violated the law and imposed an additional 300 thousand GEL financial obligation on itself.

### Fourth Violation – “According to the Department”

According to article 12, part I, paragraph A and B of Georgian Law on State Purchase, the Road Department should have published the tender announcement through some international media organization. The Department published the announcement only in the English version of newspaper 24 hour. According to Road Department, the corresponding newspaper is distributed in the embassies.

Neither the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure nor the Road Department made a comment on the revealed violations. Kakheti Information Center sent a letter to Road Department requesting the explanation on the violations occurred in connection with the tender. Despite one-month waiting, the department did not give explanation even based on the official address.

Kakheti Information Center addressed World Bank as well to ascertain how satisfied the loan giver is with the fulfilled work. As the Bank representative Soso Melitauri noted the only thing they checked was how the presented project complied with the bank standards. As for the control of expenses and work monitoring, this did not belong to their obligation.

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**Name:** ზურა შიმანაშვილი

2011-12-22 19:50

რატომ არაა, პრეზიდენტს მიაჩნია თელავი სოფლად და კახელები გლეხებად? მიუხედავად სოციალური ფენის? ეს მართო გზის პრობლემა კი არა, ყველა დანარჩენი ქართველის პრობლემაა კახელების მიმართ

**Name:** თენგიზი

2011-01-28 09:20

აღნიშნული გზის მონაკვეთი ;თბილისი-უჯარმა-სასადილო ნამდვილად კარგია,ხოლო სასადილო-გომბორი-თელავი არ ვარგა.კარგი იქნებოდა სტატიის ავტორებს ეს მომენტი გაერკვიათ,რადგან ამ მონაკვეთებს ორი სხვადასხვა კომანია აშენებდა.

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