



Travertine to Have Status of Natural Monument

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Rehabilitation works of the tunnel in the vicinities of the Travertine – sour water mountain in Kazbegi, were suspended. Representatives of the Ministry of Environment said the construction, which damaged travertine was not illegal because the territory did not have status of natural monument. However, the Agency of Reserved Territories stated the vicinities will have the status in order to avoid similar facts in future.

Travertine valley is part of Kazbegi tourist zone, and mineral waters in the area are the source of the travertine. Nongovernmental organization Stepantsminda spread information about the damage of travertine several days ago. Organization representatives reported that road was paved through travertine valley.

Head of public relation unit at the Road Department Rusudan Khubulava said the road was constructed via travertine valley due to urgent necessity.

“Three tunnels are being rehabilitated alongside Kazbegi motorway. In one of those tunnels, builders had to enter the territory of sour waters. A collector releasing soil water was discovered in the place. It was necessary to remove it in order to deepen the transportation part of the tunnel and to increase its height; it will make the tunnel more transitive. They will not touch travertine in other parts,” Rusudan Khubulava told ICMM.

Deputy Minister of Infrastructure Shota Murgulia said constructing the road across the territory did not require special permission.

“It was not a monument and contractor did not need any permission for the construction; it happened because the tunnel was left without attention during 20-25 years. Human life is more valuable than beauty,” Murgulia said.

Agency for Reserved Territories within the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources also confirmed that travertine on Gudauri-Kobi road did not have status of natural monument.

Environmental organizations made strict statements on the damage of travertine. Green Alternative spread petition which stated that mineral lake in Truso Gorge and travertine, Dariali and Khda Gorges, buried forest in Goderdzi Pass are threatened to be damaged. So, the Organization appeals to the government of Georgia to investigate the fact of damage of travertine in Gudauri-Kobi road and to the Parliament of Georgia to discuss the draft law On the Creation and Management of Natural Monuments in haste.

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