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## Two missing after Kazbegi landslide

By Gvantsa Gabekhadze

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Two

people are missing after a landslide in northern Georgia. The Governor of Kazbegi Givi Kirakashvili said a Georgian and Turkish citizen, both employees at the Dariali Hydro Power Plant (HPP) are missing. The second landslide in the area closed down the road linking Georgia with Russia and affected the Lars Customs Service. Gas transit from Russia to Armenia via Georgia was also suspended.

Employees at the Lars Customs Service on the Georgia-Russia border and people crossing the border have been sheltered at the Monastery in Dariali Valley. These people were transported to Kazbegi later.

The landslide on August 20 occurred near the site that struck Dariali Gorge on May 17, 2014. That disaster claimed the lives of five people. Officials are stating that the disaster was because of heavy rains.

President of Georgia Giorgi Margvelashvili, Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure David Shavliashvili, his first deputy George Amashukeli and the Chairman of the Department of Roads Vazha Panchulidze, as well as some other officials have visited the disaster zone.

Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili made a special statement saying that he could not visit the region due to his official visit to Armenia.

The PM's statement reads that people were evacuated in a timely manner as a result of the alarm system installed after the May 17 landslide.

"A cleanup operation is under way. The amount of damages will be determined", Gharibashvili said.

The NGO Green Alternative claims that the landslide is due to the HPP. Representative of the organization Irakli Matcharashvili states that construction activities should not have been renewed on.

He emphasizes that the Ministry of Environment and the HPP construction company should have elaborated a different plan and design after the May 17 fatal event.

"The construction of the HPP should not continue with its initial plan, as it is being constructed in front of a landslide area. Construction of the HPP through the present manner will result in more casualties," Matcharashvili said.