NGOs called on the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia to publish the documents used as a basis for making a decision about how to proceed with work at Sakhdrisi-Khachaghiani mine.

"As it is known, on March 14, 2014, the Ministry of Culture made a decision, according to which, RMG Gold was allowed to start activities in Sakhdrisi. Even though there is a high public interest about this issue, the decision was not publicized by the Ministry of Culture and limited only with a small statement on their website. In addition, circumstances in the statement raised even more questions in regard to the impartiality of the decision," the statement reads.

The statement is signed by the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA), Green Alternative, Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI) and Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC).

Former Prime Minister, Bidzina Ivanishvili, who now leads the NGO Citizen, also made a statement about this issue. Ivanishvili believes that work at Sakhdrisi must continue, because there are a lot of people employed at the site.

However, Ivanishvili also thinks that if there is any kind of historical monument, it must be preserved. "Historical monuments must of course be preserved, but, it can be moved to another place, so we could develop both tourism and the economy," Ivanishvili stated.

Ex-deputy Minister of Culture Marine Mizandari stated that the monument has already been damaged a lot.

Different photos from Sakhdrisi have been released through the social networks in recent days stressing how damaged the site is. Studio Monitor has also released some shots showing the changes over the mine compared with the situation in 2013.

In a letter sent to The Messenger, the Ministry of Culture explained that the investigation of numerous documents and expert studies has revealed that "an ancient gold mine or a monument of universal significance was not proved to exist on the territory of Sakhdrisi-Qachagiani."

According to the Ministry, independent international experts will be invited to monitor the work implemented by RMG GOLD Company, together with the Georgian National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation. Thus, "in the case of some scientific discovery on the territory of the mine, the agency will conduct the relevant research and based on the decision by a competent commission, the excavated artifacts will be placed in the existing museum or an institution created especially for this purpose."