The Minister of Energy Kakhi Kaladze does not connect the reasons of the Dariali gorge catastrophe to the construction of the Larsi HPP. Independent experts abstain from a direct evaluation until the investigation is finished. However, two years earlier they predicted possible danger of the Terek tributaries and considered the territory where the HPP was built as dangerous. According to them, nobody can calculate the possible results of manmade environmental changes in such severe natural conditions. The catastrophe took place in a place where safety rules were to be especially observed because of a previous bitter experience. A landslide already killed several people there about 12 years ago. Due to its size and impact, it took several years to clean up the locked gorge. According to specialists, the land-tenure history of our ancestors who were so close to nature is one of the best instructors. There were reasons why people did not reside in some places. Unfortunately, this is not being considered by our contemporaries who are obsessed with business interests.

As told by an eye-witness: Karris Palitra contacted Sulikhan Gabrichidze, construction manager and eye-witness of the tragedy: - It was a usual day-break; it was calm in the gorge and nobody could imagine that such a misfortune would happen to us several hours later – at about 10 o’clock a huge mass of land disintegrated from the glacier and with a terrible rumble moved in our direction. Everything happened in seconds. It was impossible to run. We stood there dumb-struck. The disintegrated black mass completely blocked the gorge. After coming to our senses, we realized what horror had came over us. The trailers that were on the road a few minutes ago were covered in earth – no cars, no people... There was a landslide in 2007 too but it wasn’t of such scale. The Larsi HPP was officially inaugurated on 24 January. Now, according to the Minister of Energy, its adjacent territory is paralyzed due to the disintegration of one million cubic meters of land and crushed rock. A big portion of the Georgian Military Road is ruined; presumably there are dead and lost people. The Terek tributary coming out of the Devdaraki glacier, together with the huge mass of earth, slid down to the Terek gorge... The Larsi HPP was being constructed under scandalous circumstances. At the beginning of the construction it became known to the media that Dariali Energy began the construction and exploitation of the HPP on the Terek River before obtaining permission from the Ministry of Environmental Protection. It was in 2012 when the NGO Green Alternative addressed Ministry of Environmental Protection as well as Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources to stop the illegal activity and investigate the case. None of the departments reacted to this law-infringement. As a result of the HPP construction, an 8km-long section of the Terek riverbed was left without water because a huge stream of water, about 90%, was directed to the derivation channel and the tunnel. Because of this, the total length of the river is only 11 km. Independent experts protested the “arrest” of the river from the very beginning. They declared that the landscape would be changed and the established cultural-ethnographic and tourist values would be lost. It would have a devastating influence on the species that depended on the river, including the brook trout introduced in the Red Book.

Despite this and other expected problems Ministry of Environmental Protection, when Goga Khachidze was its head, did not consider the independent experts’ remarks and on 28 November 2011 issued a positive conclusion of the environmental examination to construct a 110 megawatt HPP on the Terek River. The conclusion of Green Alternative also says that the consent on the construction of the HPP was issued without studying the hydro-geological regime of the river Terek and its tributaries. The construction calculations were based on 25-year-old data. The infringements that underlay the HPP construction often invite criminal qualification. It suffices to mention misappropriation of the Kazbegi National Park territory. Having infringed on the procedural norms established by the Georgian legislation, the government and the parliament transferred 20,3633ha of land of the Kazbegi National Park territory to the HPP. In order to prevent the HPP construction and save the gorge, Niko Ketskhoveli initiated giving Kazbegi the status of nature reserve. Karris Palitra spoke with the Vice-Governor of Mtskhet-Mtianeti, Koba Arabuli. He doesn’t rule out a repeated attack of the elements as well as a connection between this catastrophe and the HPP construction: - Geologists are studying the causes of the landslide and results will be known soon. At this stage, luckily the...
Terek cut its way through the disintegrated mass and there is no more danger. But this is what we observe here. Nobody knows what's happening up there, at the glacier. We have to find out whether the Devdaraki glacier and the river Devdaraki ceased functioning. It is possible that there is a locked zone very high up there and if the torrent breaks through nobody knows how it will come down and what will happen here. We are facing a global problem, global warming causes glacier-melting at a different tempo; not being able to control this process, having no preventive means gives us such terrible surprises. The Devdaraki is a huge glacier, it's been disintegrating for a long time and massive landslides occur. Therefore, we must observe the glacier from time to time. Nature makes us think about this and whatever is happening now is a way of control this process, having no preventive means gives us such terrible surprises. The Devdaraki is a huge glacier and the river Devdaraki ceased functioning. It is possible that there is a locked zone very high up there. Nobody knows what's happening up there, at the glacier. We have to find out whether the Devdaraki glacier and the river Devdaraki ceased functioning. It is possible that there is a locked zone very high up there and if the torrent breaks through nobody knows how it will come down and what will happen here.

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