

To the President, the Premier Minister, Parliament of Georgia,  
The Council and Governor of Kazbegi municipality,  
The Public Ombudsman of Georgia,  
The Developers of the 500 KV Ksani-Stepantsminda transmission lines project:  
The KfW Development Bank,  
The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD),  
The European Commission (EC)

### **Statement of Kazbegi region citizens**

Dear Madams/Sirs,

We are approaching to you regarding the two high voltage transmission line projects - 220 KV Dariali-Stepantsminda and 500 KV Ksani-Stepantsminda - planned and ongoing in Kazbegi municipality. Currently reconstruction of 110 KV transmission line within the 220 KV profile Dariali-Stepantsminda and 500 KV Ksani-Stepantsminda transmission line projects are underway in Kazbegi municipality.

In September 15, 2015 heavy vehicles appeared in village Tsdo in order to start construction works. The company does not have construction permit and Environmental Impact Assessment report necessary for starting construction works. Moreover, community land plots owned traditionally by locals were misappropriated by the company. Locals did not have any information about it. Despite several attempts the company could not manage to start construction because of the fierce protest of local population. Several weeks ago in order to implement the project the company received construction permit bypassing the public participation procedures and in April start construction works using force despite fierce opposition of the locals.

It should be noted that there is an alternative route of the proposed 220 KV transmission line bypassing totally the village. Consideration of this alternative is the requirement of the locals but the company is still constructing it in proposed route within the village boundaries. The Deputy Minister of the Energy Ilia Elovshvili is personally involved in this process by directly lobbying the existing route as well as 500 KV transmission lines project. The police already used force, arrested one villager and disburse peaceful protest in the village, but the protest still continues.

Regarding another project - 500 KV high voltage transmission lines- it is planned to start in Ksani and pass through 5 villages of Sno valley, Stepantsminda town, village Tsdo and end up near the Russian-Georgian border. The project assumes that in Future Russia will decide to construct transmission line in its territory in order to supply electricity to the southern countries through Georgia. But according to the strategic plan of

transmission lines of Russia the construction of any transmission line in Georgian direction till 2021 is not considered at all thus making rationale of Ksani-Stepantsminda project totally vague. Moreover, there does not exist any information from Russia about their plans to be involved in some way in the project. Therefore it is clear that the need of 500 KV transmission line is not substantiated and we have not received either officially or unofficially any arguments for the project.

As you might be aware the villages of Kazbegi municipality are located within narrow gorges and transmission line projects are proposed to pass through the community lands destroying any development perspectives for these villages. Taking into account the fact that state priority is to preserve people in mountainous areas of Georgia it is vague what the rationale behind this kind of projects is.

Construction of 500 KV and 220 KV transmission lines projects on the Kazbegi municipality and village Tsdo territories will cause resettlement of these villages and negatively impact on the touristic potential of the region. Leukaemia as well as cardiovascular and mental disorder caused by the high voltage transmission lines is another concern and main threat for locals living in the villages. Thus it is not clear for us why such kind of projects without substantiated need should be implemented resulting migration and deterioration of living conditions of the villages along the border line.

Taking abovementioned we would like to kindly ask you to stop technocratic boom in Kazbegi municipality and require to stop immediately development of 500 KV transmission line project proposed for the Russian electricity transit and change the route of 220 KV transmission lines that will not pass the community lands of the village Tsdo.

In case if our demands are not met we will continue to protest and not allow workers to construct lines on our community lands.

Sincerely Yours

(signed by 92 locals, for signatures please see attached Georgian version)