NGOs, locals question Namakhvani HPP construction, authorities deny environmental risks

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NGOs Green Alternative, the Young Lawyers' Association, and the Center for Human Rights Education and Monitoring held a press conference on the resumption of construction work by ENKA at the Namakhvani HPP, defying the locals' protest.

According to the third sector, the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture grossly violated the procedural norms established by national and international law to ensure public awareness and participation when making an environmental decision on the Namakhvani HPP project.

The NGOs accentuate that despite serious non-compliance, based on insufficient, poor quality data submitted by the company, the Ministry of Environment and Agriculture still approved the project and issued an environmental decision.

The Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture responded to the NGOs' statement regarding Namakhvan HPP. The ministry stated, the detailed field studies in hydrology, geology, biodiversity, and others preceded authorization of the Namakhvani HPP project.

The Ministry of Environment and Agriculture says that speculation on the risks of negative impact on the environment is devoid of any argument.

Locals in Western Georgian Tskaltubo and Tsageri districts continue protests against the Namakhvani hydropower project for almost 100 days. They believe HPP threatens to change the local microclimate.

The Namakhvani hydropower plants' cascade's construction by ENKA Renewables would be carried out on the Rioni River in the Tskaltubo and Tsageri municipalities. It is one of the largest energy projects, and its total installed capacity amounts to 433 MW. The cascade project envisages the construction of two dams in the Rioni Gorge.

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