

To whom it may concern,

For more than 170 days peaceful protests were going on near the construction site of the Namakhvani Hydro Power Plants (HPP) in Georgia. The local population is worried for their safety, their land and for the biodiversity potential of the territory.

Climate Action Network Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (CAN EECCA) is standing in solidarity with its Georgian members and the local activists currently protesting the harmful project. We urge you to learn more about the current situation and to spread the word of the civil society for it to be heard outside of Georgia.

The main investor of the Namakhvani Hydro Power Plant cascade and 90% shareholder is the Turkish corporation ENKA, the other 10% belongs to Norwegian company "Clean Energy Group". As the investor states on their webpage: It is the largest energy project in the history of Georgia's independence, which is implemented with a direct foreign investment up to \$800 million.

On April 11th the protesters camp was evicted forcefully and since then the activists had to move to a nearby city Kutaisi. As the political situation in Georgia becomes more unstable, the civil society cannot trust the authorities and feels threatened.

Unfortunately, despite numerous appeals to different agencies - the relevant structures of the executive branch of the country, the project investor and the builder have not taken any effective steps to improve the project documentation and EIA, as well as to actually assess the situation and expected risks. This makes the country's energy independence policy even more opaque and causes mistrust of the local population and CSOs towards these projects.

Why does this matter so much for the Georgian civil society?

- There has been a horrible history of accidents with the previous Hydropower stations due to landslides, incomplete environmental impact assessments, mudflows and floods. A significant part of the country is a mountainous, landslide-prone and seismic zone. (CAN made [a video covering the risks of Namakhvani HPP](#) being built within 20 kilometers from Kutaisi. In case of collapse, the dam will threaten the second largest city in Georgia with a flood wave.)
- Another reason to worry is the ecosystems found in the forest near the area of construction. This is one of the world's most untouched natural territories which will be annihilated, amid the ongoing sixth mass extinction.
- In addition, people's homes are being destroyed and the government is forcing entire villages out of the way for construction. Some human rights violations have been declared by the protesters as well as obstruction for the journalists to cover the story.

This is a matter of international interest. Georgia has ratified Paris agreement and, thus, promised to work for the 1.5 degree goal and protection of its ecosystems. Georgia has also

signed an Association agreement with the EU and is supposed to comply with the human rights protection standards, the environmental impact assessment on the level which the EU requires.

The civil society demands are as following:

1. Improve the legislative-regulatory framework for risk assessment and prevention during the implementation of hydropower projects, as well as ensuring the safety of existing hydropower facilities;
2. Cancel the construction of the Namakhvani project;
3. Establish moratorium process for all the planned HPP projects in Georgia;
4. Develop a long-term strategy for the energy sector with wider society involvement (including local populations).

Georgia has great potential to develop alternative, renewable energy sources and receive: wind, solar, geothermal, biomass and waste energy, etc., whose total potential will increase the country's energy independence and at the same time protect and preserve the unique nature of Georgia. It will also contribute to the safe and sustainable development of local communities.

To realize this potential, the Government of Georgia needs to develop a renewable energy development strategy, which will involve non-governmental organizations along with the local population as one of the stakeholders.

For more details firsthand please contact georgian activists:

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Yours sincerely,

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