



EMC, GREEN ALTERNATIVE AND GYLA RESPOND ON CRISIS IN SHUKRUTI AND ITKHVISI

Confrontation of locals with Georgian Manganese LLC in Shukruti village of Chiatura municipality has resumed. In September and November 2019, residents of Shukruti have been demanding compensation for the damage caused to their homes and living environment through the company's activity from Georgian Manganese LLC. According to the residents of Shukruti, verbal agreements with the company over damages have been violated many times, provoking renewed resistance from locals in the form of blocking mines of Shukruti village and hindering their work. In light of the

failed experience with Georgian Manganese, the residents of Shukruti are asking the Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia to mediate for negotiation with the company.

On February 23 the mine was also blocked in the village of Itkhvisi, where locals, like the residents of Shukruti, link damage of their homes, ancillary buildings and agricultural land to the operation of the mine and demand compensation for damage from Georgian manganese.

Our organizations have repeatedly called on the state to take care of the determination of the damage caused by the operation of mines and protect the right of the local population to live in a healthy environment. However, recent developments show that the state does not take responsibility for the acute problems facing the residents of Shukruti and Itkhvisi.

Georgian Manganese LLC denies its liability for the ecological and social damage caused to locals. At the same time, referring to its “high social responsibility”, the company said in a statement on the Shukruti crisis that it was ready to give some compensation the residents of Shukruti. In situations when locals remember hard experience in dealing with the company and many precedents for breaking agreements, it is especially cynical, that the company calls on to back into negotiation so that the enterprise can continue its operations smoothly. It is also worth noting that the company highlights its “high social responsibility” when it has been repeatedly penalized for violating conditions of the license and for damaging the environment, as well as for failing to comply with deadlines set by the Department of Environmental Supervision [4], with a total fine of up to GEL 400 million. In the current situation, it is important for the state to understand the crisis in Shukruti and Itkhvisi, to take an active role and to eliminate the social and ecological catastrophe that the local population remains vulnerable to.

The signatory organization calls on:

Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia

- Be interested in the concerns of the residents of Shukruti and Itkhvisi and study the extent and forms of environmental and social (including health) impacts on people

through the establishment of a special commission, as well as develop a damage assessment methodology and ensure the publicity of the concluding documents of the Commission;

LEPL National Environment Agency:

- Study the geological impact of the operation of mines in Shukruti and Itkhvisi and to determine whether there is a link between above mentioned and the damage to property and infrastructure of the population.

LEPL National Agency of Mines:

- Check that the rules and norms for the use of minerals in Shukruti and Itkhvisi and the surrounding area and the license terms granted to Georgian Manganese LLC are fulfilled or not;

LEPL Technical and Construction Supervision Agency:

- Conduct periodic special technical inspections of the mines of Shukruti and Itkhvisi.

Department for Environmental Assessment of Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia:

- Exercise state control over the protection of the environment and the use of natural resources in order to prevent environmental contamination and irrational (and possibly illegal) use of natural resources in Shukruti and Itkhvisi.

The Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC), Green Alternative and the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association continue to monitor the situation on the ground and if they wish will provide legal assistance to the residents of Shukruti and Itkhvisi, including through legal proceedings.