



Human rights organizations call upon the government to timely and effectively solve the crisis in Chiatura

It has been more than 10 days since the miners striking in Chiatura city have been protesting against hard and unfair labor, social and environmental conditions in their place of employment. Some of the employees express their protest with hunger strike and in other heavy forms. The city population, the people employed in the markets, the pupils, and the drivers have explicitly high solidarity towards the employed people. And people employed in various industrial zones of Georgia also support the strike of the miners from Chiatura. The dimensions and radical forms of the protest have once again acutely raised a point of need for understanding and solving the severe consequences of unsolved economic and social problems existing in Chiatura over the years.

As a result of the activities of [] Manganese A severe conditions are created in Chiatura in terms of environmental protection and labor. The company has a 40-year license to extract manganese in Chiatura and Sachkhere areas. Under this license it owns 16 430 hectares of Chiatura and Sachkhere municipalities and also area of plot

of land purchased in different villages. Due to high dimensions of production and substantively weak environmental policy there are a large amount of industrial waste and harmful substances for human health in water and air in the city and surrounding villages. In 2013-2017 the environmental damage from violations revealed by the incomplete inspection of the activities of [REDACTED] Manganese A LLC made up 416 110 418,51 GEL.

Besides the environmental damage, which is severely reflected on the health of the resident population of Chiatura, unfair labor practices (which are related to fair remuneration, health care, safety and other labor conditions) in the company established over the years are severe. The 24-day strike of 2012 ended only with 9% increase in salary, as for the majority of the problems related to labor safety, they remained unsolved.

As a result of the production activities, in response to the most severe labor and ecological conditions created in Chiatura, main demands of the striker miners are related to fair labor remuneration, improvement of extremely severe ecological situation of the city and creation of a fair social environment. Specifically, the demands of the strikers are the following: increase of salaries, improvement of insurance package, prohibition of movement of heavy trucks in the city, and creation of labor guarantees on workplaces for the employed people in case of reaching an agreement and end of strike. Despite the supporting public statements made by the government officials, the government has not taken any effective steps to overcome the created crisis so far. The meeting on May 26 between representatives of the company and the strikers also ended unsuccessfully.

Taking into consideration the above mentioned and the difficult situation, we support fair and objective demands of the employed people, with regard to proper remuneration for their hard work and ensuring worthy insurance offer, in addition we demand:

1. In the current crisis situation, taking into consideration the local discontent, needs and visions and with the involvement of the employed people and the population in Chiatura, **the Government of Georgia to develop a democratic political vision and ways of overcoming the crisis;**
2. **To create a thematic inquiry group in the Parliament,** which will

systematically analyze existing social, environmental and labor situation in the mining cities, develop the alternative economic development policy vision and implement effective and realistic parliamentary supervision over the government policy.

3. To hold a hearing of temporary director of [REDACTED] Manganese A in open and public format on May 28th, at the sitting of the Sector Economy and Economic Policy Committee of the Parliament, in order to give opportunity to the interested individuals and the society to get acquainted with the ongoing discussion and to evaluate it.

Signatories:

Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC)

The Green Alternative

Georgian Young Lawyers' Association

The Open Society Georgia Foundation