



EMC and GYLA respond to strike of employees of "Georgian Manganese" LLC in Chiatura

Photo: Interpressnews

On May 15, [REDACTED]A miners employed by "Georgian Manganese" LLC in Chiatura went on strike. The shift work means a 12-hour shift during 15 days (or nights) without an official break time. In the 15-day period, "Georgian Manganese" LLC requires the employees to live away from their families and the public in the company's dormitory. The initial demand of the strikers was to improve the quality of the food in the above-mentioned dwelling. However, soon after the strikers were joined by other employees, the demands changed. Today, the main demand of the strikers is to increase their wages by 50%. They also require as follows: Improvement of the insurance package, restriction of heavy vehicle transits through the city and the guarantees that once the agreement is reached, the company will not impose any disciplinary measures against the strikers. With the above demands, 15 miners have

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been on hunger strike in the tents arranged near the premises of the City Hall for already seven days. Furthermore, on the night of May 22, one of the strikers sewed his mouth shut in protest.

In addition, the vehicles loaded with manganese are not allowed to leave the city and travel to Zestafoni.

The employer requested the employment mediation, but the mediator failed to negotiate between the parties, as the strikers did not have an initiative group that could represent them in the process of the negotiations.

It is of note that the strikers refuse the professional unions to participate in the strike.

Despite the unsuccessful attempts of the mediation, the employer, in lieu of stopping the strike, offered the strikers to increase their salaries by 25% within the planned "reorganization" of the "Georgian Manganese", which the strikers rejected.

On May 22, the [REDACTED] Manganese A published an official statement on its Facebook page claiming that the strike is unlawful and the company intends to appeal to the court and law enforcement agencies as all of the negotiation capacities with the strikers have been expired.

EMC and GYLA condemn the practice of violation of the labour rights by [REDACTED] Manganese A. The existence of such practice has been confirmed and revealed by the surveys conducted regarding the labour situation in Chiatura, the statements provided by strikers, as well as the spontaneity of the ongoing strike.

Although the strikers have included their problems only within the above four demands, it should be emphasized that the situation in the Chiatura mines with regard to labour safety is really grave.

Furthermore, frequent are the cases of neglecting the vacation, break time, sick leave, overtime labour rules and the practice of loading employees with extra work along with those obligations undertaken by the Labour Contract.

Therefore, **we call on the [REDACTED] Manganese A LLC** to take into consideration the fair claims of the strikers and respect the labour rights of the workers and labour legislation. In addition, we urge the company to refrain from pressing the employees

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by threatening them with the court and law enforcement agencies.

We request the State to ensure labour safety and labour rights in the company and at the same time act as a guarantor that the right of the workers to fight for their rights and fair and dignified working environment will be ensured.

The ongoing strike demonstrates the deficiencies of the labour legislation as well. In this respect, the State should increase the mandate of the labour inspection to supervise the adherence to the labour legislation that will create an effective mechanism for ensuring labour rights.