



Georgian Young Lawyers' Association responds to the decision of the Ministry of Culture and Historic Monuments' Protection about Sakdrisi-Khachiani gold mine

At the press conference held on March 14 GYLA voiced its position about the permit issued by the Ministry of Culture and Historic Monuments' Protection to "RMG Gold" for implementing gold mining in Sakdrisi Khachiani territory and gave negative assessment to the Ministry's decision.

According to the information released on media, at the March 14 press conference the Ministry of Culture and Historic Monuments' Protection explained that the decision was adopted on the basis of the research conducted by the National Agency for Protection of Cultural Heritage, that determined that Sakdrisi Khachiani is not the ancient gold mine. Alexander Margishvili, the acting Deputy Minister reported: "We cannot create a problem to 3000 families on the basis of the myths. The conclusion was submitted to the investor, the decision is already made and it will not change."

Society is unaware of the research that was used by the Ministry in decision making process.

As determined, the decision was adopted without conclusion of international expert examination, while the Minister of Culture and Historic Monument's Protection upheld recommendation of the Embassy of Germany on the necessity of international expert examination in terms of Sakdrisi- Khachiani gold mine. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also supported the recommendation, therefore change of the position is absolutely

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unclear. Adoption of the decision in a speedy way raises questions about impartiality of the Ministry.

According to the information released by the Ministry, international experts and specialists will have chance to monitor activities that will be implemented by the company in the nearest future. Though, the way of conducted the monitoring and its effectiveness is unclear, since the company became entitled to implement wide scale activities. We consider that impartial decision from the side of the Minister should have been based on the advance conclusion of the international expert examination, that could not be substituted by the monitoring implemented directly in the gold mining process.