



Many questions remain unanswered a year after the explosion of Sakdrisi-Kachagiani

On December 13, 2014, the company RMG-Gold illegally exploded ancient gold mine of Sakdrisi-Kachagiani located in Bolnisi Municipality. The explosion resulted in irreversible damage of the archeological site. In another statement in reaction to the explosion, we state the following:

- A day before the illegal explosion of the ancient gold mine of Sakdrisi-Kachagiani on December 13, 2014, the Ministry of Culture and Monuments Protection of Georgia and the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia implemented 17 actions and adopted 4 decisions in less than a day, in gross violation of Georgian law.

Despite the scale of violations, no one has been held liable at the Ministry or the Agency.

- The question of how the Ministry and the Agency were able to revoke Sakdrisi-Kachagiani's status as a protected historical site and grant the company permission to "deconstruct" the site, all in less than a day, remains unanswered. December 12, 2014 developments raises serious doubts that these decisions had been made long before and were formalized on December 12, 2014. In addition, violations identified in a hasty decision-making process raises doubts about possible improper interventions and corrupt deals.

- Despite official calls, the General Prosecutor's Office of Georgia has not yet undertaken any effective investigative measures into the explosion of the ancient gold mine, which leads us to believe that the investigation is delayed intentionally and suggests lack of political will of the authorities;

-We regret that in March 2015 the Parliament of Georgia voted down the initiative to establish ad-hoc investigative commission for Sakdrisi, despite the fact that several months before the parliament had supported the idea of the commission;

-On February 4, 2015, Tbilisi City Court made a decision not to suspend legal acts that revoked Sakdrisi-Kachagiani's status and allowed deconstruction of the site, which greatly contributed to eventual destruction of the archeological site. The court's decision dated Feb.4, 2014, raises serious doubts about independence of the court.

GYLA believes that those former and current civil servants (and most importantly, those high-ranking officials) who were directly involved in destruction of Sakdrisi-Kachagiani should be held responsible. In edition, the prosecutor's office should launch timely and effective investigation to identify all individuals involved in illegal explosion of the archeological site on December 13, 2014.