



## **EBRD's IPAM DRAFT REPORT, 2022**

### **RESPONSE to the IPAM recommendations over non-compliance, re the NTG COMPLAINT**

13<sup>th</sup> Sept 2022

#### **GENERAL RESPONSE**

- 1) We note that the EBRD IPAM process has ***taken considerably longer*** (over a year) than promised by the IPAM team – to the direct detriment of those affected by the now proceeding road-construction and tunnelling work. During this time more damage has been done re the non-compliance issues spotted in the initial draft report – and the many not spotted.
- 2) IPAM have ***not made adequate reference or response*** to a number of our specific points in our 27<sup>th</sup> Feb response to the non-compliance uncovered by the report – listed below. IE no reference was made to them other than non-specific generalities.
- 3) The ***secrecy requirement*** imposed by the IPAM process is not only harmful to those directly concerned by the huge construction now being undertaken in the Khada Valley, but it gives the impression that IPAM is no more than a delaying tactic to give the appearance the Bank is trying to rectify mistakes being made – rather than rectifying them. By the time locals are allowed to see the report, (we are still not clear when – as the time-line promises have been broken by the Bank so many times in the past) a host of new non-compliance events will have happened, which could have been rectified.
- 4) The ***wording*** in the Recommendations is so general as to leave the reader unclear to what specific remedies they actually require – or what direct action might be taken.
- 5) There is no mention of the recommendations called for in our 27<sup>th</sup> response that the Bank's ***2014 ESP be corrected***. This gives the impression that the Bank is unconcerned about improving its own internal processes – to the considerable harm of those affected by its mistakes.

We ask that IPAM pass the above comments to the Bank Management for response.

#### **CULTURAL HERITAGE ACTION PLAN (CHAP)**

This plan presented to the stakeholders in 2022 is based on a false premise – of the road's continuation without proper analysis of alternatives, as repeatedly called-for by the NTG. In his live presentation the author claimed the road construction offered an excellent 'opportunity' to preserve the cultural heritage of the Khada Valley. When the NTG chair Marine Mizandari pointed out that the giant bridges, tunnels, spoil heaps, access roads, traffic pollution, constant noise and vibration would have precisely the opposite effect, he agreed with her point. (The conversation has been recorded). This demonstrates how this Action Plan is almost useless for the heritage of the valley – since it ignores the premise of the road. It is made to look even more like a sticking plaster over the systematic destruction of a historic Georgian valley – or an attempt at 'green washing' the project.

## **ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE NTG AND NOT ADDRESSED BY THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Cemeteries and Bekot Kari church**

Nowhere in the Recommendations is any mention made of the NTG's complaint about the road passing through the Bekot Kari cemetery and within 600 metres of a historic monument – listed in the NTG's complaint (Point 5) and Conclusion (Point 3).

The NTG took the IPAM team to the church and cemetery, specifically showed the proximity to the graveyard, and unexplored archaeological sites.

This is among the most obvious violations of international standards in heritage preservation. It still seems to have been completely ignored by IPAM.

### **Eco Tourism Capacity Building Alternative**

The NTG's complaint mentions the golden opportunity for Eco-tourism capacity building in the valley – by the Banks – without the road. No mention was made of this either – as the Recommendations are based on the false premise of the road, stated above.

### **Imprisonment of villagers**

The Recommendations make only scant reference to the huge impact of the project on the villagers. Nothing was said about the case of Sopho and Nikoloz Rostiashvili, 86 years old, from the hamlet Rostiant Kari (named after their family).

It makes no mention of the recent cases of imprisonment of local villagers who are being prosecuted by the RD, specifically because of this road project.

If the Bank is not aware of this, then IPAM should brief its senior representatives, as this is only likely to become worse. If they require more information, they should contact the NTG, who can provide it.

### **Death of a worker**

Between the presentation of the CHAP and the Recommendations a Chinese worker was killed in the tunnel (Lot 1). This demonstrates even further the lack of proper supervision and Health and Safety research done on the project. It is another clear reason why the work should be stopped, and urgently, before more die.

## **CONCLUSION**

The NTG states very firmly again that this project should be halted by the Bank Management in light of the unusually large number of non-compliant issues found by IPAM with both Lots (1 and 2) of the Khada Valley project. That the only effective way to resolve the non-compliances with ESP PR1, PR8, and PR10 is to stop work on the road, and disbursement of the Bank's funding.