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GYLA responds to the events in the village of Shukruti

On May 13, a representative of the Kutaisi branch of the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association visited the village of Shukruti in Chiatura Municipality, where locals have been protesting for 87 days against irreversible damage to the natural and social environment of the village caused by Georgian Manganese extracting minerals. During this time, three locals took extreme measures to protest and sewed their lips (mouth) for ignoring the demands of the protesters by the state and the company.

According to the residents of Shukruti, as a result of the activities of the company "Georgian Manganese", the environmental pollution has become irreversible. Life in the village has become dangerous for the locals as their houses have become uninhabitable due to the damage caused by the company, and they are no longer able to use their land which is under their ownership for agriculture, leaving them without income.

According to the locals, they have been asking Georgian Manganese Ltd for years to compensate for the damage caused to their homes and living environment due to the company's activities. In their opinion, the company does not fairly determine the amount of damage, as well as their freedom of expression has been restricted, as local authorities and police did not allow a protest tent to be set up in front of the Chiatura Municipality administrative building.

Despite the extreme measure of the protests, the state is completely disregarding the rights of the locals, and they are left alone in the face of the mining company, which again avoids its responsibility and for years refuses to meet the legal and equitable demands of its affected population.

Accordingly, GYLA calls on:

Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia:

- To create the format of a dialogue that ensures that the legal demands of the affected population are met by Georgian Manganese;

Legal Entity of Public Law of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia to the National Agency of Mines:

To verify and control the compliance of the company "Georgian Manganese" with the conditions of the mineral extraction/mineral exploitation license;

To the Department of Environmental Supervision of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture:

- To exercise state control over protecting the environment and the use of natural resources in Shukruti to prevent pollution and unsustainable (and possibly illegal) use of natural resources.

Ministry of Internal Affairs:

- To allow the protesters to enjoy the right of peaceful assembly.

Residents of Shukrut, despite their repeated disregard for their demands, plan to continue protesting until they receive fair and adequate compensation from the company for the damage done to them and are not given the opportunity to live in a healthy environment.

The Georgian Young Lawyers' Association continues to study the situation on the ground and expresses its readiness to provide legal assistance to the affected population of Shukruti by protecting their interests in court.