OPEN LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER NIKOL PASHINYAN

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Open letter to Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to you as a professional geologist, sedimentologist, with work experience in seismology and water wells. Our education in geology entailed hydrogeology, geochemistry, geophysics and paleontology. I graduated with distinction, from the same department of the same university, as some of the Lebanese experts of ELARD. I know one of them personally. I have no doubt in their scientific knowledge and good intentions.

However, I have my doubts in business dealings whenever company interests come first. Being an Armenian of the diaspora who is following Armenian news so closely, I am extremely worried for my homeland. I have previously and multiple times expressed my professional opinion and concerns about this mining project in Amulsar.

On September 4th, 2019, I would like to see a firm decision to stop this mining project, for the very following reasons.

1. The location of Amulsar geographically is so dangerously close to important villages and water systems. The clean drinking water will ultimately be contaminated with heavy minerals and byproducts caused and used (e.g. cyanide) by the mine, no matter what they say on paper. This is very dangerous to public health. The process is very slow and catastrophic. The next generations will ultimately feel the consequences. If heavy metals mix with drinking water, soil, and food, they will be poisonous, cause cancer and dangerous diseases. I am not yet counting the harmful dust particles in the air, that will travel long distances.
2. No study of water samples analyzed now, is an indication of what will happen tomorrow when the mine starts operating. We can only extrapolate and predict the consequences. And it will be too late to control these consequences because damage will be like a domino effect and too big to be contained. Whoever is confident that nature can be controlled, has no scientific understanding. Can you control an earthquake for example? Nobody can guarantee anything when it comes to mining damages. New proposed studies will be a waste of time and money. Armenian academicians and experts can certify on my statement.
3. Being the interested party, evidence provided by Lydian is unreliable. Their work is limited, misleading with beautiful promises and presentations, and as Mr. Bronozian has pointed out several times, Lydian has no plans and extra money for clean-up. This clean-up is even more costly than what is already invested and will be invested in the future, thus rendering the gain to negative. The mining company can go bankrupt at any time and flee the country, leaving the Armenian government and the people deal with the deadly consequences. Teghut is a good

example. There are plenty of mines in Armenia to learn from, and I believe a study was launched in that regard. The public, as well as professionals, would like to know what happened to those results, and why the minister was discharged before declaring them.

4. Jermuk village, a health resort: which country in the world would sacrifice a jewel such as Jermuk, a source of tourism, so rare in the world? Places like that are counted on fingers. Bottled water from Jermuk, we so proudly presented to foreigners, counting its characteristics, being 10x stronger than the French water "Perrier". This trademark will be lost forever once people know there is a dirty mine next to it. Tourists have already voiced concerns, saying they will not come anymore if they know there is a mine next to it. Who would like to hear constant noises, explosions and watch tractors and heavy machinery from their windows, when they have come to a resort to rest and heal?
5. Lake Sevan: so vital to our existence is at risk. Already seen the consequences of different pollutants. Videos have surfaced, of how dirty waters of Sotk gold mine are pouring into lake Sevan via rivers. Accounts of sewage water pouring into it, untreated. Wastewater flows into it, untreated. These same waters later are used to irrigate the fields. The phenomenon of cyanobacteria (blue green algae) will be repeated again next year, not only because the air is warm but also because waters are polluted, and volumes withdrawn. What's missing was the Amulsar Mine.
6. Climate and global warming: this topic has not yet been discussed, but it is an important factor to consider. Armenia's climate will be affected, desertification will occur, as the mountain is being degraded. Wind current direction will change. Even more dust will be blown into the air, and as a result climate will change. An international environmental court will count this as an offense.
7. On the human right front: it is completely anti-democratic to disregard people's will, mainly Gndevaz and Jermuk villages, who I believe have collected some 12,000 signatures to stop this mine, people who will directly be impacted by the mine. People who have been lured into selling their lands to Lydian, who later cut down their orchards. They have started several petitions with the environmentalists and attracted our attention. How will Armenia's human rights record be affected on the global stage, if we disregard our people, drag our respected environmentalists like criminals, by the police, and cave in to the bullying of an offshore registered corporation who is collecting its wealth by selling stocks on the market? International investors are not going to blame Armenia for refusing a questionable mine enforcing itself on a poor country. On the contrary they will be more confident that Armenia has a better human right record and trustworthy rules with no corruption. And trust is their No. 1 priority.
8. Court of Law and arbitration: Armenia has strong arguments to face any court, which will not reach to international levels. Because Lydian knows it is guilty and will not expose itself in a court of law. Whatever the settlement, it will be minimal compared to losing our homeland.

Hoping that my expert opinion will receive your kind attention.

Yours respectfully

Houry Ellezian

Geologist

The original letter in Armenian on Facebook

There are no comments yet.