

Why Amulsar should not be exploited?

The Amulsar gold mine project does not take into account the very real risks to the environment and human health that the public.

YEREVAN, YEREVAN, ARMENIA, March 16, 2015 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The risks connected with the exploitation of Amulsar first of all are associated with the country's strategic water resources because all the mine infrastructure will be distributed in the Arpa and Vorotan River catchment and nearby Kechut and Spandaryan Reservoirs, which in turn lead to Lake Sevan basin (according to the RA's law about Lake Sevan, refer to



Article 3). During the mine operation, liquids saturated with new type of toxic metal compounds [1] will be dumped into the Vorotan-Arpa tunnel, which then will be transferred to the Kechut Reservoir, and from there the liquids will flow into Lake Sevan via the Arpa-Sevan tunnel, fundamentally changing the composition and quality of the lake. However, RA's law, specifically Article 8 and 10, about Lake Sevan, prohibits any type of activity that will have a negative impact on the lake ecosystem [2]. It is not known and it is not possible to manage the problems and risks that arise as a result of the mine drilling and blasting in the tunnel.

If Amulsar is exploited, then it will be end of Jermuk Resort City

Amulsar project carries significant risks for the Jermuk Resort City, which is located only 8 km away from Amulsar. According to the Jermuk development plan, the border of the tourism zone is located 2-4 km away. Jermuk with its mineral resources is considered a highly-rated health center and as a result of the mine exploitation, it will lose its status as a health resort and the majority of the population in the area will end up unemployed. It is also not possible to control the impact of thousands of explosions carried out during the mine exploitation on the mineral resources of Jermuk. Therefore, if the Amulsar mine is exploited, Jermuk Resort City will cease to be a center for health.

Amulsar Mine project puts in jeopardy many endangered species listed in the Red Book

According to the data published by World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in 2013, the breeding grounds for 1 plant, 18 types of birds, and 4 types of mammals are located on the Amulsar Mine Project area. All of the mentioned species are listed in the RA's Red Book for endangered species. The RA Law Code, specifically Article 26, about Subsoil prohibits operating a mine near the breeding grounds and migration passages of red-book listed species.

Cyanide solution composed of highly toxic compounds will be used

Geoteam CJSC has officially announced that during the mine exploitation they will use cyanide solution, which is extremely dangerous to human health and the environment [3]. Geological studies of samples tested from the mine reveal that each ton of ore contains 0.8-0.9 grams of gold. The other accompanying elements, such as cadmium, lead, arsenic, and other compounds, will remain in the environment in the form of a reactive compound and as a result of exposure to sun and air molecules, they will spread and poison the water, soil and air. The exploitation of the Amulsar mine will put the surrounding areas, such as pasture land, meadows, and vegetation fields in danger of contamination. The crops from these areas will be polluted and become a real threat to human health.

Radiation poisoning is a possible danger

The open-pit mining operations of Amulsar Gold Mine can impact the nearby uranium mine [4], leading to radiation poisoning of Jermuk Mineral waters and the surrounding villages. The radiation risk is also mentioned in the conclusion of the Expert Committee for Conservation of Lake Sevan and RA's Nuclear Security of State Committee President's letter.

Are banks and international institutions promoting international standards, responsible mining and respect for human rights aware of the violations of the legislative acts and damage to human health and environment that will result from the exploitation of the Amulsar mine? If they are aware of this information and continue to provide funds, then it proves that they are either turning a blind eye to the violations for sake of their business profit or operate according to double standards.

The time frame set for the mine exploitation indicates a robbery

The work schedule and time frame for the exploitation of the mine has been determined already. The Republic of Armenia has given permission to produce a total of 10 million tons of ore annually for a duration of 10.4 years. However, such a mine should have never been allowed to exploit or in necessary cases should be exploited in at least 120-150 years.

What is going to be left for people of Armenia after the exploitation of the Amulsar mine?

After the exploitation of the Amulsar mine, 122 million tons of shattered and crushed ores containing heavy metals and toxic elements along with 342.7 million tons of empty mineralized rocks containing the weaker form of the same toxic elements will be left behind.

Amulsar has a strategically important geographical location

Amulsar is of great strategic significance to Armenia, connecting the regions of Syunik, Vayots Dzor and Artsakh to one another. For that reason, no economic activity is justified threatening the strategic position adjacent to this particular area. Further, mining would cause serious contamination problems for the region of Vayots Dzor and Syunik jeopardizing its drinking and irrigation waters.

Considering the above, we consider Amulsar mining as a betrayal towards the state of Armenia.

1. Exploitation of Amulsar mine will lead to production of 2.5 million ounces of gold, which will cause huge mining dumps.
2. Having this in mind, the expert committee in 2012 expressed its concern for open -pit mine projects functioning close to the Lake Sevan.
3. In addition, the emergence of the gold extraction will produce lead elements that contribute to cancer, cardiovascular diseases and increases birth defects. Moreover, the production of cyanide is planned to be covering the area of Gndevaz community with its 280 households, farms, gardens and agricultural lands.
4. According to scientific articles, Amulsar contains 75 tons of uranium and 100 tons of thorium

(Armenia and its potential for radioactive material resource utilization

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