

March 5, 2003

Mr. Kerim Yildiz,
Executive Director
Kurdish Human Rights Project
2 New Burlington Place
London W1S 2HP
United Kingdom

Dear Mr. Yildiz and Colleagues:

Re: Kurdish Language Translations of BTC Documents

Thank you for your letters of January 15, 2003 addressed to Messrs. Kaldany and Murray concerning Kurdish language translations of BTC documents. I am responding on their behalf.

Much progress has been made following the BTC project's ESIA consultation and disclosure process last summer. Last fall BTC began consultation and information dissemination activities to prepare for the land acquisition process. These activities included the disclosure of the Guides to Land Acquisition and Compensation, in-country disclosure of Resettlement Action Plans, village-level meetings and detailed discussions with individual households in assessing affected land parcels, crops and other assets. As part of IFC's ongoing appraisal activities, IFC staff recently observed current land acquisition, consultation and negotiation processes in a cross-section of villages in Georgia and Turkey and will shortly do the same in Azerbaijan.

As mentioned in a previous letter, IFC has been concerned that all affected households along the pipeline route have readily available access to information about the project's impacts, its land acquisition procedures, and its compensation measures, in a language with which they are fully conversant.

We discussed with BTC whether any practical measures could be taken to ensure that every project-affected person had meaningful information available. BTC has included Kurdish-speaking members in teams involved with community liaison, land acquisition and negotiation, particularly when visiting communities with households of Kurdish origin. The BTC teams noted a very high level of literacy in these communities, and IFC concurs after a detailed verification in the field.

IFC's social development specialists have made various visits to a cross section of affected villages to observe the land acquisition process and to validate BTC

consultations. During the last visit to Turkey, IFC staff observed the land acquisition process in a number of communities, that are either entirely or partially of Kurdish origin. Discussions were held with a range of affected households, village leaders and elders, local schoolteachers, and other members of these Kurdish communities.

In our conversations with these members of the Kurdish communities, we were informed that there was no one in these communities who was not fluent in Turkish. While Kurdish is also commonly spoken it was emphasized by respondents that very few individuals had ever seen local Kurdish dialects in written form and almost no one had ever learned to read Kurdish.

Those few individuals that cannot read Turkish are also illiterate in Kurdish. In addition, all affected households and communities consulted indicated their strong preference for use of the Turkish language for negotiations and documentation of land acquisition agreements. Discussions with a local NGO (Rural and Urban Development Foundation) involved with third party monitoring of the community liaison and land acquisition processes, gave no reason to believe that this situation is any different in other Kurdish communities along the pipeline route. We do recognize that this is not necessarily the case with other Kurdish communities elsewhere in Turkey (such as the southeast) distant from and not directly affected by the pipeline.

We are committed to ensuring that project-affected people have access to information in a language with which they are familiar and will continue to monitor progress. We have stressed to BTC the need for the continued inclusion of Kurdish speakers on the community liaison and land acquisition teams and that, should affected households request the guide or land acquisition agreements in Kurdish (or any other minority language), this will have to be addressed appropriately.

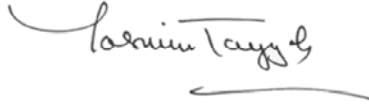
The Kurdish-speaking members of the teams that IFC staff met are from the districts traversed by the pipeline and are familiar with local circumstances. They are obviously competent and professional team members. It was clear from IFC staff observations that the land acquisition teams have been able to establish a good rapport and a relationship of trust with affected communities. This sets a sound foundation for ongoing interaction when construction commences. BTC has clearly demonstrated a commitment to continue with active consultation and community liaison activities.

The recent process of community liaison and land acquisition negotiations for the BTC project is being undertaken thoroughly, and there is no doubt that local awareness and involvement in the consultation process have increased markedly in recent months. Affected households are readily signing land acquisition agreements, and the process is proceeding much more smoothly than expected. A strong grievance mechanism is in place to address any complaints or issues. There are thus indicators that the consultation and negotiation process is being undertaken at a high standard, consistent with IFC requirements.

We are keenly aware of the political and cultural nuances in Turkey and will continue to monitor the process through field visits and meetings with affected communities and will seek opportunities for refinement or improvement.

We thank you for your interest and look forward to a continuous constructive dialogue with your organization.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yasmin Tayyab', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Yasmin Tayyab
Civil Society Coordinator

Cc: Nick Hildyard, The Corner House UK
Antonia Tricarico, Campagna per la riforma della Banca mondiale Italy
Manana Kochladze, CEE Bankwatch/Green Alternatives, Georgia
Mayis Gulaliyev, President of Caucasus NGO Confederation, Azerbaijan
Kate Hampton, Climate Coordinator, Friends of the Earth (England, Wales and Ireland)
Kate Geary, Ilisu Dam Campaign/Bake-Ceyhan Campaign
Karen Decker, BIC USA
Carol Welch, Friends of the Earth US

