

Report of the visit of the Ilisu village on the 15th June 2008 because of the planned (already implemented) Ilisu project.

By Ipek Taşlı

To have some information about the stage of Ilisu Dam Diren prepared a few questions that will be asked to villagers in Ilisu Village. Because we were banned to make such a kind of research, it had to be done secretly. A lawyer from Batman municipality gave us a name which could give us some info about the events happens in the dam area right now. That guy had a restaurant near by village. We would go there, have lunch and talk about the situation. After a number of check points we could reach the place of restaurant. The man would meet (Abdulkerim Çiçek) wasn't at the restaurant. After 20 minutes he came with another guy dressed some uniform of soldiers. But he was local. He must be a village guard (*regional militia working with the Turkish Army; annotation by Ercan*) or something. He sat just next to us and listened all the dialogue between me and Abdulkerim. Actually there was not a real dialogue because he nearly replied all my question as "I don't know", he told me that he has no idea about the dam. Of course it was difficult to believe in him. Because he was an adult inhabited in that village which will be submerged with the dam water. He will lose his house, land, and the other stuff. It is not possible to not have an idea under these conditions. Anyway, he didn't inform us about their situation unfortunately. (*I have talked to this man together with Christine Eberlein in October 2007, there he has said many critical things about the Ilisu project. In the report written in October 2007 we changed his name because he has called me after the talk and said that he is afraid of any oppression by state authorities if his name is mentioned; annotation by Ercan*)

We tried to reach the Muhtar (headman of the village). But he told us he was busy and we don't have the chance to see him.

As we were turning back two women (a mother and her daughter) on the road wanted to come to Dargeçit with us. They were from Karabayır village which will be another victim of Ilisu dam. They were quite obvious when we start to talk about dam. On the way they showed us a place where you could see some kind of structure will be built on. The old lady told us that that place is their land and they have a title deed for it. But now the soldiers has captured there and a Jandarma (military) station is being built for the security of Dam building. Neither has anyone asked permission from the owner of the place, nor they were paid for it. When I told them that the situation is not justice and they have the right to refuse to give the land to soldiers, she said: "but we are talking about the soldiers. They are a part of the state. how can I be complainant for what state does. I have lost my husband in the conflict in the region. I have just one son and I don't want to lose him by dealing the military force. I can't sacrifice my child for a piece of land." I asked her if the any accommodation is prepared for the villagers who has to abandon their houses. I have been told that there is a plan to build a housing estate. But to have one of the houses you have to get into dept for long years. Namely the houses aren't given to villagers, they are sold. Also the place of that housing estate will not be chosen by villagers. The authorized ones will decide the place. She didn't know much about the activities run in the village. She and her family have moved to Dargeçit and hired a house there a few years ago. I wondered how much they paid for the house rent. She told me that they have paid 40 liras per month, but owner wants to rise the price to 100 liras. They want to find another house, but they can't find a house under 150 liras. Due to the immigration from the villages the rents of the houses has been risen and risen.

So we can understand how the dam effects people's life in a bad way, even though it is not active yet.