



# Armenia's New Environmentalists

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# Why is Environment important to a country's development & growth?

- Sustenance
- Shelter
- Trade routes



Photos by Ursula Kazarian

# Environmental Decisionmaking

## What is Sustainable Development?

"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

--Brundtland Report, 1987, United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development

# Environmental Decisionmaking

- How do we achieve Sustainable Development?

Factors:

- Environmental
- Economic
- Social





# Natural Resource Management: Preservation vs. Conservation

*Balancing environmental wealth with human needs*

- Preservation:
  - Maintaining natural state for intrinsic value



Photos by Ursula Kazarian

# Natural Resource Management: Preservation vs. Conservation

*Balancing environmental wealth with human needs*

- Conservation:
  - Exploiting at a sustainable level to permit current and future enjoyment



Photos by Ursula Kazarian

# Defining Environmental Justice

- "Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. EPA has this goal for all communities and persons across this Nation. It will be achieved when everyone enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work." --US Environmental Protection Agency



# Defining Environmental Justice (cont.)

4 types of environmental justice\*

1. Distributive
2. Procedural
3. Corrective
4. Social

\* Model from “A Taxonomy of Environmental Justice” by Robert R. Kuehn

# Distributive EJ

- 1) Protection and elimination of environmental risks for **all**
- 2) Equitable distribution of environmental burdens and benefits



# Procedural EJ

- “Right to treatment as an equal.”
- Equal concern and respect in political decisions
- Fairness in decisionmaking process
- Values an inclusive process over outcome

# Procedural EJ (cont.)

- Does affected community agree in advance to decisionmaking **process**?
- Is there equality among parties (including affected community) in access to legal and technical resources?
- Indicators
  - Sufficient notice of public hearings
  - Convenient locations for public hearings
  - Inclusion in agency meetings
  - Public accessibility of important documents

# Corrective EJ

- Seeks to impose accountability
- Remediation
- Reparations
- Damages
  - Relocation of residents/EPA Superfund cases
  - Cases throughout Latin America against pesticide manufacturers--unsuccessful
  - *Aguinda v. Chevron* = 18.2 billion USD verdict against polluter

# Social EJ

- Reflects overall reality of disadvantaged groups
  - Recognizes that exposure to hazardous waste is as important to impacted communities as underfunded schools, lack of jobs
- Armenian example: Mashtots Park
  - Lack of green spaces in Yerevan, natural urban recreation areas
  - Overlaps into rule of law/justice issues

# Environmental Justice in Armenia

- History of environmental activism
  - Industrialization under Soviet rule
  - *Perestroika/glasnost* period
  - Post-Soviet era
    - Nagorno-Karabagh War
      - Energy crisis: De-greening Yerevan
      - Metzamor nuclear energy plant
        - Continuing controversy
        - Improper disposal of nuclear waste



# Present-day problems

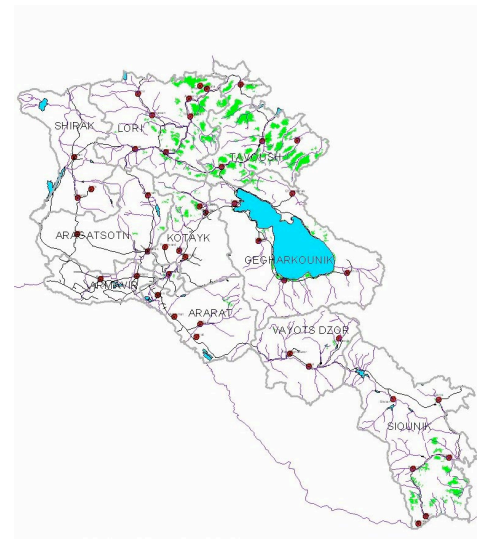
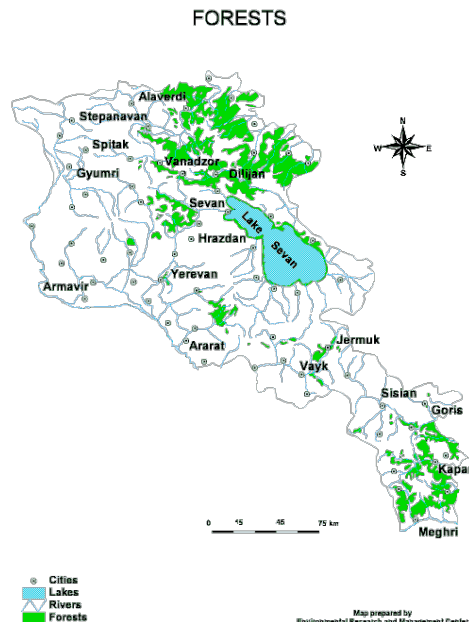
- Wastes

- Industrial—old oils, solvents, paints, chemicals
- Medical—improper disposal of medications
- Solid/municipal—currently no functional waste management plan
- Only most basic water treatment



# Post-War period to present-day

- General environmental problems
  - Deforestation
    - From 90s-present, decrease from ~35% forest cover to ~6-8%
    - 20-50 years: no forests left in country



Maps courtesy of Armenia Tree Project

# Teghut

- Small, forested area in Lori region



Google Map courtesy of Save Teghut! Facebook page



# Teghut

- Teghut is one of Armenia's last, pristine, virgin old-growth forests



Photo by Vardan H. (Save Teghut! Facebook page)

# Teghut: A rare jewel



Photo: Hrayr Savzyan

- Over 300 species of birds, animals, and plants thrive in this forest
- IUCN Red Book of Armenia:
  - 6 plants
  - 29 animals



# Teghut: A Disaster in the Making

- 357 hectares approved for clear-cutting\*
- ~200 hectares leased to Armenian Copper Programme (Vallex) for 25 years\*
- ACP granted rights for construction of ore processing plant and supportive structures on ~274 hectares for 50 years\*

\*ROA Decree 1278-N “On Changing the Designated Purpose of Lands for Implementing the Teghut Copper and Molybdenum Mine Operation Plan and Allocating Land Plots.” November 1, 2007

# Teghut: A Disaster in the Making

- ~81 hectares privately owned agricultural land approved for government taking, naming ACP as “acquirer” of lands for mining project\*
- Most recent publicly reported figures put total area slated for project at ~1500 hectares

\*ROA Decree “On Recognizing an Exceptional Prevailing Public Interest in Some Territories within the Administrative Boundaries of the Shnogh and Teghut Rural Communities of the Lori Marz of the Republic of Armenia and Changing the Designated Purpose of Lands.” November 1, 2007

# Teghut: Conflicts

- \$280 million invested
  - \$30 million=ACP
  - \$245 million loan to ACP=VTB (Russia)



Photos: Hrayr Savzyan



# Teghut: Conflicts

- 81% of ACP shares = Vallex (Liechtenstein)
- 19% = Valeri Medzhlumyan (Diaspora-Russia)



Photos: Save Teghut! Facebook page and Hrayr Savzyan

# Teghut: Impacts

- 500 million tons copper/molybdenum tailings projected to be dumped into nearby Debed River
- 600 million tons related waste to be produced



Photo: Jeff  
Masarjian

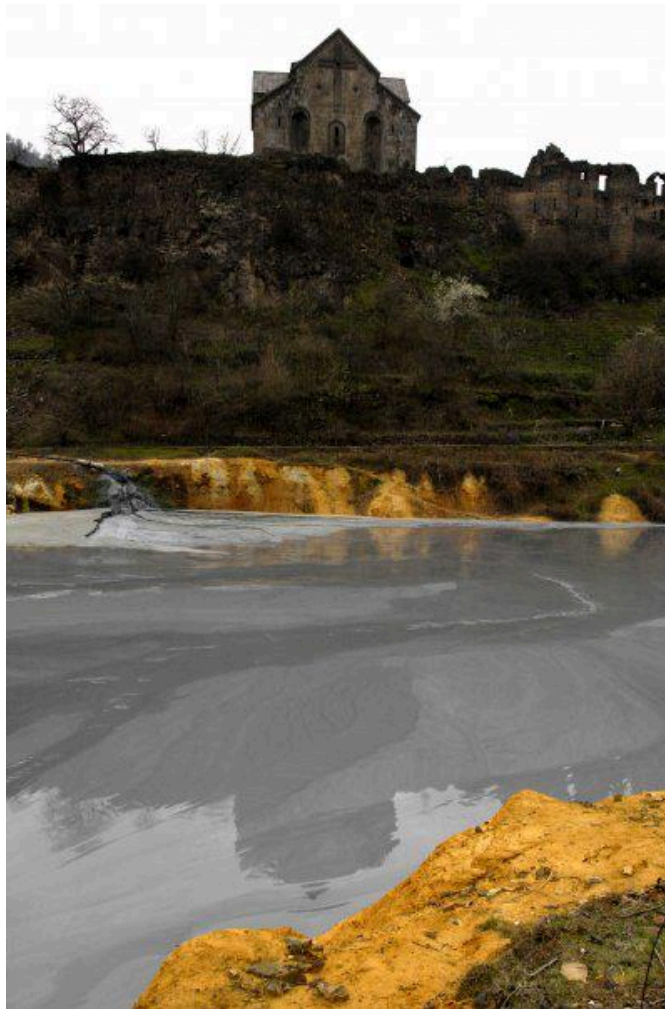
Akhtala River-  
Impacts from  
previous  
mining project  
(s)



# Teghut: Impacts

Akhtala  
River

Photo: Jeff  
Masarjian



Impacts from  
previous mining  
project(s)

# Spotlight: Vallex

- Privately held
- Registered in Liechtenstein
- History of acting without real public input
- In 2007, ACP exported all copper it produced; 90% sold to Germany; remainder to other European countries
- However, ACP is only mining company in Armenia attempting to market itself as adhering to Armenian environmental laws\*

\*Lydian International is expected to publish its EIA for a mining operation at Amulsar, near Jermuk, in late 2012

# Environmental Impact Assessment

- Teghut EIA one of first in Armenia for mining project
- Funded by Vallex
- EIA Conducted by Lernametalurgiai Institute-LMI (Vallex partner/subsidiary)
- Recent claim of second EIA, performed by Environmental Resources Management (ERM)
  - No public hearings
  - Findings undisclosed

# Disconnect?

- Shnogh villagers see short term gains
- Activists from Yerevan see long-term costs



Photos: Hrayr Savzyan and Save Teghut!  
Facebook page

# A case for activism

- Small but strong opposition group, mostly youth but wide range of supporters



Photo: Mariam Sukhudyan



# Putting Words into Action

- **Get Involved**

- **Write: Embassies, join campaigns**
- **Donate time and expertise**

- **Go!**

- **Working vacations**
- **Volunteer**
  - **Birthright/AVC, AEN, other individual orgs**



# Notes

- Supporting documents available at [www.armenia-environment.org](http://www.armenia-environment.org)
- Visit Save Teghut! Facebook page for up-to-date news and articles regarding Teghut and other environmental issues
- For more on environmental justice model used, see “A Taxonomy of Environmental Justice” by Robert R. Kuehn, Environmental Law Reporter, Vol. 30, p. 10681, 2000. Available for free download from the Social Science Research Network at: [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=628088](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=628088)



# Thank you

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