



Report of the Public Hearing on resettlement in Hasankeyf by the Hasankeyf Initiative

**Diren Özkan
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The meeting took place in Hasankeyf, from 3pm to 6 pm, on April 15, 2008

Organisers of the meeting:

The meeting was conducted on April 15th, 2008 by the Hasankeyf district administrator (one step below the governor of Batman). There were also the DSI deputy general director and the expropriation- head of DSI and representatives of TOKI (the state construction agency which for more than 20 years has built houses in all big cities).

Objective of the meeting:

The district administrator informed that they will not discuss the dam because the decision to build the dam has already been taken. Therefore he stated that he would not allow any comments or questions regarding the building of the dam. However they wanted to inform the affected people only about resettlement issues. He therefore only allowed participants to raise issues regarding resettlement.

Participants:

- 100 people participated in the meeting which was in the garden of the high school.
- People were informed about the meeting 3 days before by the municipality which used a loudspeaker on a car.
- In the meeting were no women.
- In the meeting were around 15 civil police officers. They took pictures of participants. The police did not allow the German journalist Susanne Güsten (ARD), who happened to be in Hasankeyf at the time, to do interviews during the meeting or report about the meeting.
- DSI did not say that they will publish a report or something similar after the public meeting. DSI did not distribute any information material.
- The presentation by DSI took one hour. It was only about expropriation and resettlement. After that approximately 15 people asked questions.

Information provided by DSI:

The DSI deputy general director said that they will do everything necessary for the development of the country and **that the construction of the dam has started.**

The head of the DSI expropriation team gave technical information about the expropriation process. He informed the participants about the conditions for resettlement and how the application for this new site must be done:

The people, who chose to move to the new resettlement site, must be in the status/framework of a family. Furthermore he said that the new houses/buildings will be constructed in a way appropriate to the region. One house will be for one family and have a garden. The price for one house will be approximately **73.000 YTL** (currently around 57'000 SFr or 36.000 Euro). Not everybody has to move to the new settlement site. If a family chooses to move there, **the amount of 73.000 YTL will be set off against the amount which the family will get for their apartment/house in Hasankeyf. The people have to pay the remaining amount after 5 years in a period of 15 years.** On April 15th, TOKI started with a survey in Hasankeyf where they asked people how the new settlement site could be.

Questions and answers by the public:

- **The mayor of Hasankeyf** informed at the beginning that he estimates the price for houses in Hasankeyf will only be around 20'000- 30'000 YTL. The houses are old and in the past years have not been restored (comment by Diren Özkan: as restoration and new buildings are prohibited in Hasankeyf). He also said that they (= the Hasankeyf Initiative of which he is part) are against the dam and that they will continue with their efforts to stop this project. However as the subject of this meeting is expropriation and resettlement he will only discuss these issues.
- **Diren Özkan, Hasankeyf Initiative:** How is it possible that construction has started without fulfilling the 153 conditions? Also Hasankeyf is protected as a first degree archeological site.

Answer: This question was answered not by DSI, rather by the Hasankeyf district administrator who was nervous. He said that we (= the government) can take lift the protection of Hasankeyf whenever we want.

Questions by some shop owners: The caves in the city centre, in which we used to sell things and gifts to the tourists, have been closed by the governor for conservation reasons. The governor argues that shop owners have to present a plan how the caves can be used and preserved at the same time. This plan has to be provided by the owners but it is costly and unaffordable for the owners as it needs to be done by an architect and archaeologist. The owners would like to know what will happen.

Nobody from DSI or the government could answer this question.

Question by some people: The new planned resettlement is on the field of the Dezen family from the village Kesmeköprü III. But this family, which has used the land for decades, only holds land titles for one part of the land, not for the larger part. The family filed a law case in 2006 to obtain the rest of the titles. However they have not yet received a court case or a legal answer. The family doesn't want that the people from Hasankeyf will be resettled on their land, before they haven't obtained the legal titles. This issue created an internal conflict between the people and the affected families. Nobody from DSI or the government could answer this question.

General uprest

Many people in the meeting became angry when they learned that they have to buy the new resettlement houses at an exorbitant price. The people asked to get the new houses without charge, fearing that they would not receive enough money for their old houses to buy new ones. In general the people were very angry and felt betrayed. Due to the price of the new houses, which will be unaffordable for them, most people don't want to go the new resettlement site. One of the villagers of Hasankeyf demanded a new resettlement site instead of the planned one. He would prefer a location east of the road to Gercüs/Midyat.

Impression by Diren Özkan:

Particularly the district administrator tried to influence the people. He said to the people that the state will do everything they want to make them happy. This is typical for state officials in that region. In the past decades state officials often said they will do this and that. But this was only said and there was nothing written. In the region the word/promise of a person is important and people rely on this and the state officials play on this intentionally.