

CASE STUDY SERIES DAM DISPLACEMENT

This series addresses a gap in awareness and knowledge about people internally displaced by dam construction.



LESSONS NOT LEARNED

Turkey's Ilisu Dam

18 JULY 2017

Summary

The Ilisu hydroelectric dam on the Tigris river in south-east Turkey is Europe's largest dam project under construction. The project was first mooted in the 1950s. As of early 2017 the land acquisition and expropriation process was nearly complete, the dam was around 80 per cent built and 190 families had been resettled. Displacement was not yet complete.

It is one of the world's most controversial dam projects, because of the number of people it will affect - some estimates put the figure as high as 78,000 - and the ancient cultural heritage and unique ecosystems it will destroy. It is also politically sensitive. The dam is being built in a volatile area near the Syrian and Iraqi border, and most of the people affected are from Turkey's minority Kurdish population.

Access to the area is restricted, limiting the amount of data and information available on displacement and resettlement. The fate of those still to be displaced is uncertain as resettlement land is scarce and land ownership is complicated, affecting eligibility of the displaced to government assistance to settle elsewhere.

International support for the dam has waxed and waned several times. In 2007, Germany, Switzerland and Austria granted funding via state export insurance to Turkish companies, but withdrew it in 2009 based on international pressure and their own assessments of non-compliance with their standards. The government has since used public and private bank loans to self-finance the dam.

Residents in the dam construction and reservoir area have borne the brunt of Turkey's long-held determination to complete the project. It is too early to draw conclusions about overall displacement and resettlement, but despite the Turkish government's construction of a new settlement for some of those to be displaced by the flooding, the process thus far has not been fully in line with international standards.

Land has been expropriated without those affected being consulted or given enough information, and before resettlement sites have been identified. Compensation has been insufficient to replace lost housing and land, and it has not always been paid directly to the beneficiaries. A planned livelihood restoration programme and complaints mechanism have not materialised.

Most affected people oppose the dam and sympathise with local protest campaigns. Turkey is still in a position to reverse the adverse consequences of displacement and resettlement caused by the Ilisu dam and avoid future adverse impacts. Lessons learned could also be shared with other countries embarking on similar projects.

Introduction

Ilisu in the context of Turkey's dam projects

Turkey is one of the world's most active countries in building dams. It has around 1000 large dams¹, which the International Commission on Large Dams defines as greater than 15 metres in height or having a storage capacity greater than three million

cubic meters.² Many were built in the Euphrates and Tigris basins in the southeast regions of the country for the purposes of hydropower and irrigation.

The Ilisu hydroelectric dam is part of the government's Southeast Anatolia Project (*Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi*, GAP), a major development initiative launched in the 1950s. It envisages the construction of 22 dams and 17,000 square kilometres of irrigation systems in the Euphrates and Tigris river basins. Fifteen large dams have been completed. GAP has increased transport, industry and electricity production, but it has been fiercely criticised for displacing as many as 180,000 people, submerging historical sites and destroying ecosystems.³

The Ilisu project is situated on the Tigris river in south-east Anatolia, around 65 kilometres from the Syrian and Iraqi border, as shown in Figure 1. It is named after a small village near the dam site, and the area is outstandingly rich in biodiversity and thousands of years of cultural heritage.⁴ The dam will be 1.8 kilometres wide and 135 metres high, and will create the third largest reservoir in Turkey. It will submerge 313 square kilometres of land, an area the size of Malta.⁵

FIGURE 1: THE ILISU DAM SITE



The project is expected to provide two per cent of the country's energy needs, and its catchment area touches on the provinces of Batman, Diyarbakir, Mardin, Siirt and Sirnak. The Turkish government states that around 2,000 families or 15,000 people will have to be resettled and only one town, Hasankeyf, will be fully affected.⁶ NGOs and experts who have worked in the area believe 78,000 fully or partially affected people from 199 settlement areas to be a more realistic figure.⁷

Ilisu has been one of the world's most controversial large dam projects, and has sparked national and international protests over its impacts. These include the loss of thousands of homes and livelihoods; the government's failure to seriously consider alternatives to the dam and meet basic international environmental and social standards; the submergence of 81 cultural sites in Hasankeyf, a place of international historical and

archaeological significance; unmitigated impacts on ecosystems and endangered and endemic species in the Tigris valley, including the biosphere reserves of the Iraqi marshes; and the potential to cause regional conflict over water between Turkey and downstream Syria and Iraq.⁸

A complex mix of development, conflict and impoverishment

A history of setbacks and revivals

The Turkish government has tried and failed three times to obtain international finance to build the Ilisu dam. The first attempt failed in 1996 because of a lack of investor interest.⁹ A second attempt launched in 1998 ended in February 2002, when a British, German, Italian and Swiss consortium and the countries' export credit agencies (ECAs) withdrew in the absence of a proper environmental due diligence assessment.

In 2005, the General Directorate of Hydraulic Works Agency (DSI), the central government agency in charge of dam projects, called in a new consortium led by the Austrian company VA Tech Hydro - now Andritz AG - and supported by companies from Switzerland, Germany and Turkey. The Austrian, German and Swiss ECAs entered into a legal agreement with Turkey that required it to fulfil 150 social, archaeological and environmental conditions, including 35 regarding resettlement. When it became clear that Turkey would not meet the conditions on time, the German, Austrian and Swiss governments

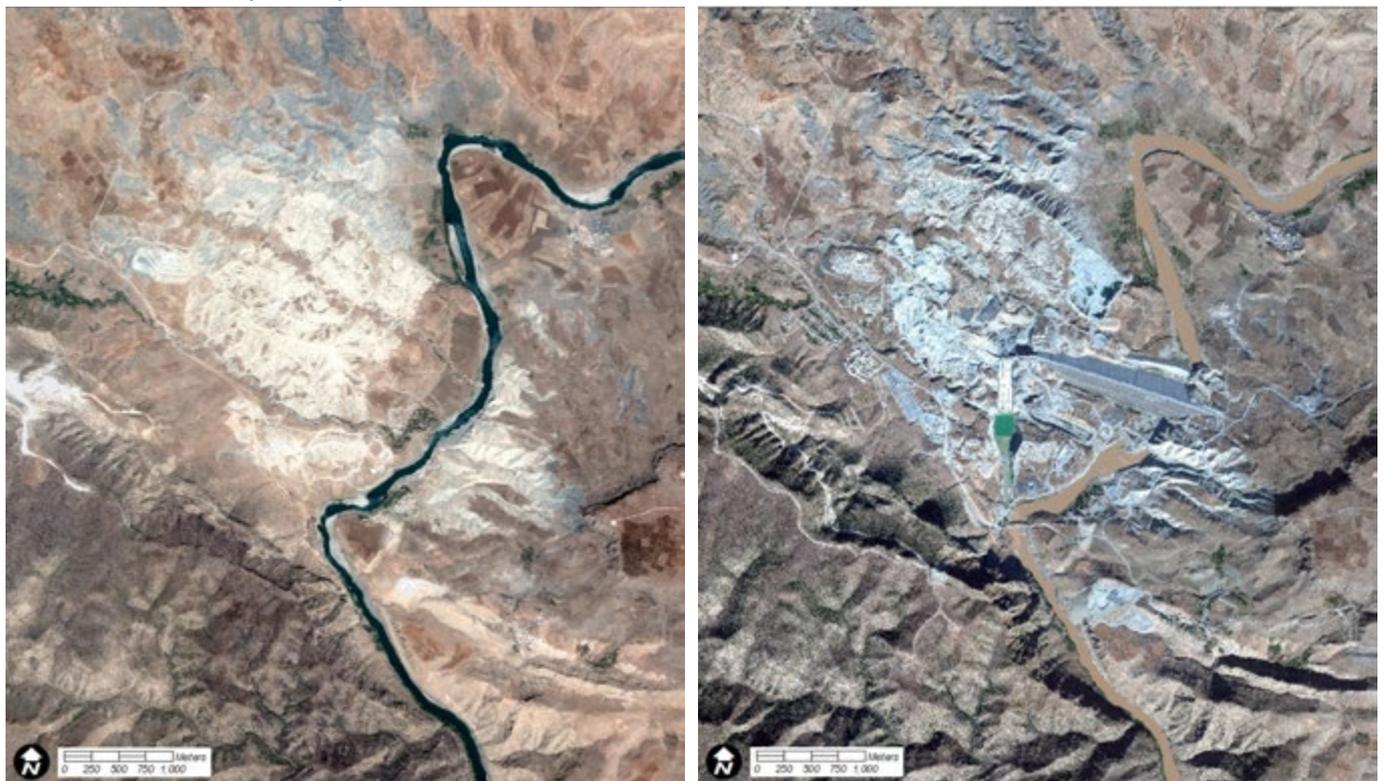
issued several warnings before withdrawing their export risk guarantees in 2009.¹⁰

ECAs are private or public institutions that provide government-backed loan guarantees and insurance for companies from their home countries that want to do business in places seen as high-risk. Because the projects they underwrite tend to have potentially serious political, social, cultural, environmental and financial impacts, many deals would not be feasible without their backing.

In February 2010, the Turkish government announced that the Ilisu project would be funded by public and private national bank loans. Dam construction started in 2011, but has been interrupted numerous times, including by a workers' strike, threats from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and a stay imposed by an Ankara administrative court because of the lack of a proper environmental impact assessment (EIA). The government responded by changing the law so that construction could continue without an EIA.¹¹ Local villagers have also continued to hold public demonstrations against the dam.¹²

Despite such setbacks, civil engineering works were finished by early 2017 and are due to be followed by electromechanical works. The dam is now 80 per cent constructed, with construction progress shown in figure 2. The completion date has been put back several times and the flooding of the reservoir is not expected before 2019.¹³

FIGURE 2: EVOLUTION OF ILISU DAM CONSTRUCTION BETWEEN JANUARY 2009 (LEFT) AND NOVEMBER 2016 (RIGHT)



Source: Copyright DigitalGlobe

CHRONOLOGY OF THE ILSU PROJECT

1954	Studies and preparations begin
1982	Final design is approved
1996	Turkish government's first attempt to finance the dam fails because of a lack of interest from investors
1998-2002	Government's second financing attempt, launched in 1998, fails in February 2002 over the absence of a proper environmental due diligence assessment
2005	Austrian, German and Swiss ECAs provide export guarantees worth €450 million (\$478 million)
2005	DSI develops a resettlement action plan
2007	Austrian, German and Swiss ECAs establish three expert committees to monitor implementation of environmental, social and cultural heritage conditions
2009	Austrian, German and Swiss governments withdraw their export risk guarantees after Turkey fails to meet the agreed conditions on time
2010	Turkey announces that the dam will be built with Turkish public and private bank loans
2011	Dam construction starts
2013	Court stops construction in the absence of a proper EIA
2013	Turkish government amends the law so that construction can continue without an EIA
2014	Turkish company resumes work on the dam
2014-2015	Construction work stalls because of wage strikes and PKK threats
2016	Dam is 80 per cent complete and 180 families have been displaced and resettled
2017	Engineering works begin to relocate the 15th-century Zeynel Bey tomb in Hasankeyf
2019	Planned flooding of reservoir

Development in a conflict zone

The Ilisu dam is situated in a politically unstable region. The vast majority of the people who will be affected by it are Kurds, Turkey's largest ethnic minority. Arab, Aramean, and Armenian minorities also traditionally inhabit the area around Hasankeyf. Since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, the government has implemented a "one nation policy" and has only recognised the rights of non-Muslim minorities.

The struggle for Kurdish rights erupted into an armed conflict between PKK's military wing and the Turkish armed forces in 1984. By 1999, at least a million people had been internally displaced in south-east Turkey, some of them in areas now affected by the Ilisu project.¹⁴

A reconciliation process initiated in late 2012 broke down in mid-2015, following an Islamic State suicide bombing in the majority Kurdish town of Suruc that reignited the conflict between PKK and the Turkish armed forces.¹⁵ By the end of 2016, at least 240,000 people had been internally displaced

during the year.¹⁶ The political situation is further complicated by the armed conflicts in Syria and Iraq, alleged PKK involvement in them and the threat posed to Turkey's stability by radical Islamic fighters.¹⁷

The Ilisu project area has been affected by the renewed unrest. PKK has threatened to bomb the dam, and as of February 2015 the government had deployed 1,600 soldiers at the construction site.¹⁸ Access to nearby villages has since been restricted, and information about construction progress, displacement, resettlement and other issues has become more limited. The Ilisu project remains a target of the PKK, which has accused the Turkish government for years of using dam construction in the south-east as a means to depopulate the region of minority groups and destroy their cultural heritage.

The insecurity in the region has implications for communities' participation in preparing for resettlement and limits the options for people displaced by the Ilisu project. The larger cities in the area already house thousands of people internally displaced by earlier conflict, and refugees from Syria and Iraq. Many have been living in substandard conditions for many months and even years, and their presence is already straining local services.¹⁹

Recent fighting between the army and PKK has damaged areas near the project site, including towns such as Dargecit, which is the preferred relocation site for many of the families affected. The standstill in trade with Syria and the Kurdish region of Iraq, and a curfew imposed since mid-2015 have also harmed the local economy, making it harder to establish new livelihoods and resume normal life.

Poverty and insecure tenure

South-east Turkey is characterised by high unemployment, low literacy rates and widespread poverty. Most household incomes are based on subsistence horticulture, apiculture, fishing and livestock rearing. Upstream cotton plantations provide some jobs and seasonal work, as does tourism in Hasankeyf, which until 2015 received around 500,000 visitors a year.²⁰ The area around the dam site is mountainous and arid, and mains water is scarce. Most people draw their water from the Tigris and its tributaries or harvest rainwater.

Farmland on the steep hillsides downstream from Hasankeyf is broken up into small plots. Upstream, it is flatter and dominated by large-scale cotton fields. Only around five per cent of the local population are large landowners. The remainder are either landless or smallholders in roughly equal number.²¹

Tenure is generally based on joint ownership by extended families, held under one name, and informal partitioning arrangements are transferred from one generation to another. Many households lease or sharecrop land. Not all land is registered in a national cadastre and many customary users do not have formal title deeds.²² Women do not traditionally inherit land or have formal land rights, but they do the most of the rural labour.²³

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF PEOPLE AFFECTED BY THE ILISU DAM ACCORDING TO VARIOUS SOURCES

Source	Date	Figure	Term used	Definition	Area
Government ³²	No date	15,000	Displaced	Not given	Not given
DSI RAP ³³	No date	71,186	Physically and/or economically displaced	Not given	Not given
Report by Ayse Kudat for the ECAs ³⁴	2000	78,000	Affected	Not given	199 settlements
DSI ³⁵	2005	39,438	Partially affected	Partial loss of livelihood and physical or land assets	116 villages
DSI ³⁶	2005	15,304	Fully affected	Complete loss of livelihood and physical and land assets	83 villages
DSI ³⁷	2006	61,620	Physically and/or economically displaced	Not given	199 villages and hamlets
DSI ³⁸	2013	37,100	Affected	Not given	70 settlements

FIGURE 3: AREA AFFECTED BY THE ILISU PROJECT



Source: Initiative to Keep Hasankeyf Alive

The magnitude of displacement

The Turkish government states on its website for the Ilisu project that the project will displace 15,000 people, whereas a 2005 official census referred to in the DSI and Ilisu consortium's amended 2006 resettlement action plan (RAP) puts the figure at 61,620 people living in 199 settlements. The estimate refers to physical and economic displacement.²⁴ The same report, however, goes on to state that 39,438 people living in 116 villages will be partially affected and 15,304 in 83 settlements fully affected.²⁵

A DSI presentation in 2013 reduced the number to 37,100 people from 70 fully-affected settlements and 80 partially-affected settlements, but it is not clear on what basis the figure was revised.²⁶ The government has acknowledged a number of challenges in compiling an accurate figure, including displacement from the area in the 1990s, high seasonal migration and a lack of accurate records.²⁷ The lack of a comprehensive census of people affected by the dam is also a major challenge

to identifying affected groups and mitigating their impoverishment and marginalisation.

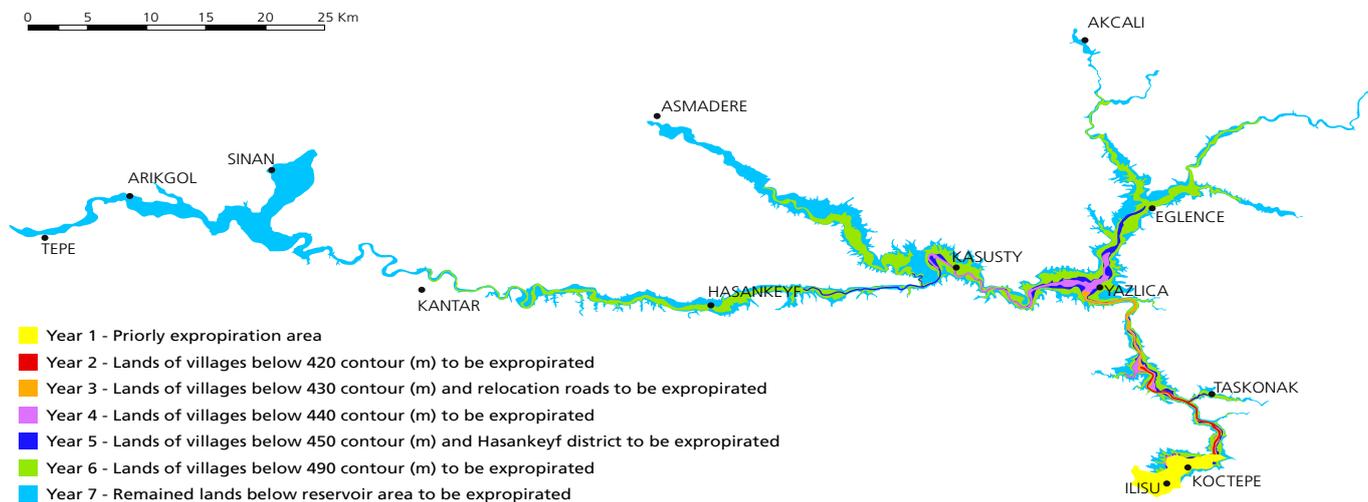
Academics, NGOs and experts who have worked in the area believe that the more accurate figure is above 55,000²⁸, and a study in 2000 even counted 78,000 people.²⁹ They point out that DSI's census excludes several categories of displaced people, including those who will have to move to make way for auxiliary infrastructure and access roads, the owners of vacant land and homes in 49 villages in the reservoir area who fled during the conflict in the 1990s, and families who will lose agricultural land but not their homes.

NGOs also say that the census neglected ten large nomadic clans numbering between 20,000 and 30,000 people who will no longer be able to migrate on their traditional route along the fertile riverbanks between their summer and winter pastures in Van and Hasankeyf, and who have not been given a new route.³⁰ NGOs have called repeatedly on the authorities to consider ways of minimising displacement and saving Hasankeyf's cultural heritage.³¹

Under pressure from the ECAs then involved in the project, DSI's Turkish consultants Encon produced a resettlement action plan in 2005.³⁹ It was, however, only published in English and provided to the ECAs. No Turkish translation was shared with the affected population. Following further criticism from the ECAs and NGOs, DSI amended the plan and made it available online in English and a leaflet was produced in Turkish explaining the resettlement process.

The plan groups the affected villages into annual expropriation and resettlement phases over seven years, as shown in Figure 4. Six villages near the construction site - Ilisu, Karabayir, Kartalkaya, Koctepe, Temelli and Dugunyurdu - were to be expropriated and resettled first. The remaining villages in the reservoir area were to be expropriated later in accordance with their altitude and the reservoir's contour level.

FIGURE 4: EXPROPRIATION PHASES AS PLANNED IN 2006



Source: DSI and Ilisu consortium⁴⁰

Nomadic women packing up their belongings along the Tigris river. Nomads were not counted as evicted or displaced in the Ilisu dam project. (Photo: Christine Eberlein)



Encon identified rural resettlement sites for each of the six phase one villages, but the action plan states that most are not suitable for agriculture because of their steep terrain, lack of water and poor quality topsoil.⁴¹ Only for Hasankeyf did DSI make a sufficiently large piece of land available for the relocation of administrative buildings and the resettlement of affected families.⁴² According to the plan, Hasankeyf has about 3,000 residents, and 480 houses and 199 commercial structures will be affected. About 64 per cent of the affected families own their homes.⁴³

Encon did not complete a baseline survey of the affected villages that included disaggregated socio-economic data. Only the number of affected families was counted and land for resettlement identified. DSI last undertook a survey in 2001, but it only interviewed 30 per cent of families in the villages to be completely flooded, and 10 per cent in partially impacted villages.⁴⁴

The expert committee on resettlement established by the three ECAs then involved in the project strongly criticised the lack of up-to-date figures and the fact that disaggregated data structured along community size, composition and the incomes of affected people by village and household was not available.⁴⁵ It concluded that the action plan's focus reflected "an expropriation-centred approach in displacements rather than a community and household-centred approach to resettlement".⁴⁶

Painful expropriation

Inadequate legal protection

Displacement caused by development projects and related compensation in Turkey is governed by two laws, one on expropriation and another on resettlement.⁴⁷ The expropriation of immovable property for public purpose usually takes place under Expropriation Law 2942 of 1983, last amended in May 2001 by Law 4650. People with title deeds to expropriated land, houses and other structures are entitled to compensation after expropriation, as are those who have informal ownership called «zilyet» after cultivating the land for more than 20 years.

Turkish legislation does not require the payment of compensation to tenants, sharecroppers and illegal users of properties. This excludes the majority of the population given that homes and land are often not registered, and that land is often treated as collective property. However, persons who have spent money and constructed buildings or other structures on the lands of other persons are compensated at replacement cost for material costs for the structures built.

The amount of compensation paid for expropriation is determined by a commission made up of architects and engineers who assign the immovable property or land in question a value on paper.⁴⁸ The commission then uses its figure as the basis for negotiations with the owner. If the parties are unable to reach an agreement within a margin determined by the commission, a court decides on the compensation to be paid. Courts tend to accept the level set by the commission. There is no deadline for courts to rule on compensation complaints and many owners of land expropriated for other dams that form

part of the GAP project have waited ten years for a decision.⁴⁹

Resettlement Law no 5543 governs resettlement prompted by development projects. Article 12 of this law states that only nuclear families are eligible and only if they own immovable property or have resided in the expropriation area for at least three years prior to a cut-off date set by the Ministry for Environment and Urban Planning. As several generations often live in one house, this leaves some families without resettlement assistance or in crowded conditions in the house in the resettlement area. Families must opt for resettlement within 90 days of the cut-off date and those who do so are not allowed to sell, sublet or mortgage their new property for ten years.

On 5 May 2015, the Turkish government issued a declaration in the official gazette defining eligibility requirements for housing in the future settlement area of Hasankeyf.⁵⁰ In line with Law no 5543, only nuclear families are entitled to resettlement. If the value of the new house and land exceeds that of the expropriated property, resettled families must pay the difference and may take a loan to cover the expense. Families without title deeds

are also eligible if they can document that they have resided in the area for at least three years prior to April 2013 and paid \$360 in a government account upfront. In addition, the government also sells plots of land in designated areas to families who wish to build their own homes. Qualifying families are indebted to the government for the value of the property they receive in the form of no-interest loans to be repaid in equal instalments over 15 years. If the debt is not repaid, ownership of the property is transferred back to the treasury.

According to international guidelines, for example, whether the World Bank's resettlement safeguards or the UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-Based Evictions and Displacement, neither the resettlement law nor the expropriation law fully protects or restores all of the rights of those displaced.

International efforts to ensure a fair deal for the displaced

Alarmed by ECA's new efforts to finance the project in 2005, a coalition of affected people, NGOs, unions and professional organisations formed the international Stop Ilisu Campaign and the national Initiative to Keep Hasankeyf Alive. They mounted a global media campaign to expose the current and potential adverse consequences of the project, and offered their expertise and information from the field. They also alerted the ECAs to breaches of their 150 conditions and suggested that multidisciplinary experts support the monitoring of their implementation.

Pressed by the coalition's findings, the ECAs established three expert committees to monitor environmental, social and

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A peaceful and joyful protest against the erection of the Ilisu dam ends in the Tigris. (Photo: Stefan Pangritz)

cultural heritage issues associated with the dam's construction. The committees guided both the Turkish agencies in implementing the project conditions and the ECAs in assessing their compliance in doing so.

In an effort to align the expropriation and resettlement process with international standards, the expert committee on resettlement made a series of suggestions similar to those that local NGOs had been putting forward for years.⁵¹ These included the gathering of detailed socio-economic data with which to prepare an adequate action plan, and improving the method of determining compensation.

The committee recommended a land-for-land rather than income-based approach to calculating compensation for agricultural land, and a building-for-building rather than depreciation approach for housing compensation. Such approaches would ensure that those displaced receive replacement homes and land plots of equal size and productivity.

Expert advice not heeded

The ECAs' contractual commitments with Turkey, the resettlement committee's tight monitoring and evaluation mechanism and the ready availability of its reports online had the potential to improve the expropriation and resettlement process.⁵²

A year later, however, the committee's first performance monitoring fieldtrip in November 2007 found that DSI had failed to fulfil 26 of the 35 agreed resettlement conditions.⁵³ Key among them were the fact that affected people had not been informed or consulted, and that no resettlement sites had been identified. International standards determine that

consulting affected communities and providing them with full information is an essential component of a proper resettlement process.

The committee also noted other shortcomings. During household interviews, some affected families said their compensation payments had not been made directly but via a lawyer, which led to confusion and mistrust. It found that in the villages of Ilisu and Karabayir, court-appointed experts reviewed DSI's compensation offer and set levels that were on average 20 per cent higher.⁵⁴ A required grievance system and income restoration plan had been established on paper but not implemented. An employment plan for affected families, also required, had not been prepared at all.

NGOs were also concerned that DSI's plan to transfer Hasankeyf's most important cultural artefacts to a new archaeological park would not succeed for technical and financial reasons, and could jeopardise the income of many residents who depend on tourism.⁵⁵

To develop a comprehensive action plan, the committee supported the creation of a project implementation unit on resettlement with institutional capacity building and advice to staff on key processes. During its second visit in March 2008, however, it noted that displacement and expropriation was taking place without the land-for-land approach it had recommended. Their overall assessment was that "the lack of preparation in the resettlement component aggravates the risks of impoverishment, destitution, and social disorganization".⁵⁶ In response, it helped the implementation unit and community members from Ilisu village to identify a new site for the resettlement of 48 households.

Financing withdrawn

After further committee visits testified that DSI was continuing to fail to meet the agreed conditions, in December 2008 the ECAs issued the Turkish authorities with a so-called Environmental Default Notice, and set Turkey a dead-line for implementing corrective actions in compliance with the conditions set earlier. The construction companies meantime were pressing to start work because they were on schedule with their technical commitment, but the resettlement component was still lagging far behind.

To speed it up, DSI urgently established its own international expert group, which developed a more comprehensive income restoration plan. NGOs' analysis of the plan, however, revealed that its proposals were still inadequate. The following year, all three expert committees reported a substantial backlog and failure to meet the ECAs' 150 agreed conditions.⁵⁷ Pressed by their findings, the NGOs' campaign and worldwide media attention exposing the shortcomings of the project, the Austrian, German and Swiss governments withdrew their financing in July 2009.

Resettlement and compensation process

Expropriation continues

DSI has continued the expropriation process since 2010, but the local Keep Hasankeyf Alive campaign reports that only 50 households from Ilisu and, according to government sources, an additional 140 from Koctepe have been resettled to New Ilisu and New Koctepe, and received new title deeds free of charge.⁵⁸ The inhabitants of the other affected villages were still living there as of early 2017, despite the authorities having expropriated their land under article 27 of Law 2942, which deals with emergencies and situations of war.⁵⁹ The article allows for immediate expropriation provided the cabinet has declared an emergency as per the provisions of the National Defence Service Law 3634.

Some younger and single people have already moved under their own initiative to try to find employment elsewhere, sometimes as far away as Istanbul.⁶⁰ For those left behind, anticipation of the dam, the negotiations around it and the power imbalance between the government and the local community is likely to have had negative psychological impacts on community members living in areas it will affect.⁶¹

In 2008, DSI created village committees responsible for relaying government information on the dam and expropriation to local residents, the imam, *mukhtar* or village leader or headteacher were summoned to participate. The committee members, however, felt they were in an awkward situation of one-way information sharing rather than meaningful participation, and so declined to take part further.

In response, DSI returned to the former method of announcing expropriation and resettlement details in the local gazette and informing male heads of household families as called for by Expropriation Law 2942. In Hasankeyf, a

small and mostly unmanned DSI booth provides information to pre-selected journalists, but villagers say they do not know the timeline for their displacement or the filling of the reservoir.⁶²

Empty resettlement village

The government has built administrative buildings and six-storey blocks of flats near Hasankeyf for resettlement of the town above the future water level. The first phase of the project consists of 58 apartments of nine different types.⁶³ According to newspaper sources, Turkey's fourth longest bridge will cross the reservoir, and a tourism facility, a 25-bed public hospital, a new district governorate building and other social, cultural and sports facilities are planned.⁶⁴

"The government is not giving the new homes to the people. They are selling them."

Following contradictory messages about the process by which residents would leave their homes, DSI and the district governor informed them of the resettlement process, the cost of new housing and the legal issues involved at a meeting in July 2016. Prices for new homes range from 53,000 Turkish lira (\$15,300) for a two-bedroom apartment to 116,000 lira (\$33,500) for a townhouse.⁶⁵

Despite the new housing being of better quality than their current homes, many of which were built in the 1970s, none of the town's inhabitants has moved. One resident offers a reason for their reluctance to do so: "The government is not giving the new homes to the people. They are selling them."⁶⁶

Others say the only promising thing about the resettlement village is the new hospital and schools.⁶⁷ Yet, some also criticise that the 25-bed hospital, which was built in New Hasankeyf for 20 million lira (\$5.5 million) and opened in 2016, can only be used as a health centre providing urgent services, due to the lack of doctors in the hospital.⁶⁸ Many say they will not move into the new blocks because there is no land for cultivation or livestock rearing. They would prefer to move to the cities such as Batman or Diyarbakir, where they hope they might find jobs.⁶⁹ Most oppose the dam and sympathise with or openly support local protest campaigns such as the Initiative to Keep Hasankeyf Alive.⁷⁰

The struggle for compensation

DSI initially offered affected families about \$5,800 for their expropriated home or business. After public protests and court appeals against compensation levels that would not allow the beneficiaries to secure similar housing, local courts raised the average compensation amount to between \$21,000 to \$42,000, depending on the size and location of the expropriated home. The owners of small souvenir shops in Hasankeyf also managed to secure increased compensation after protests. By 2016, 90 per cent of the eligible property owners in most villages had reportedly accepted the amounts on offer.⁷¹

In the village of Suceken, however, the court ruled against increasing the offer of \$5,800, and villagers have refused to sign their expropriation documents until they receive a better deal.

Compensation for property owners subjected to emergency expropriation, in accordance with Article 27 of the Turkish expropriation law, is determined by a commission within seven days, and the sum is deposited in their bank account without negotiation or a hearing with them. Only after expropriation can they take legal action to dispute the amount paid.⁷³

In 2011, an announcement in the Resmi Gazete regarding the phase one villages stated that families seeking to resettle must file their request to do so within 30 days, and that they could only be resettled in one house even if they were living in more than one property. Most families did not take up the offer because they were unable to afford the price of the new homes, and it was not based on a house-for-house approach.

Only in one village did some families apply to resettle, but the authorities did not respond to their request. In 2014 they filed a demand for resettlement in court, but their case is still pending. The expropriation process is now almost complete, but DSI has allowed those affected to remain in their expropriated houses until the reservoir is flooded.⁷⁴ It is not clear whether the government will resettle them. Families without title deeds have been left empty-handed, despite *zilyet* and other provisions for their protection.

The houses cost double the amount of compensation the families were paid for their original larger homes and land, if they were paid at all.

Displacement impacts

Given that the majority of families affected by the Ilisu dam have had their land expropriated but still live in their homes, it is too early to study the full impacts of the eviction process, displacement and resettlement. Conclusions may already be drawn, however, from the experience of displacement from Ilisu and resettlement in New Ilisu, and similar processes associated with other nearby GAP dam projects.

In New Ilisu, two families resettled spontaneously while the 48 resettled by the government had little choice but to buy the housing and land on offer. These comprised an 800 square-metre plot of land with a 125 square-metre one-storey house with three or four bedrooms and a lawn.⁷⁵ The houses cost double the amount of compensation the families were paid for their original larger homes and land, if they were paid at all. Many had to take out loans to buy their new housing, and they fear that after the grace period, they will be unable to afford the monthly instalments and will fall further into debt. Families of as many as 12 members were entitled to only one house each. Nor does the location next to a busy road and near a military base compare with their previous idyllic setting next to the river.

Given their smaller size, they now live in more cramped conditions. New Ilisu residents also say that they have not been given an equivalent amount of land for cultivation and livestock rearing, and that the grapes and pomegranates they grow in their backyards are insufficient to earn an income as before. Around 1,500 men from the region were employed

short-term at the dam construction site, but local residents say only around 200 were from villages affected by the project.

A playground, a public meeting room, a primary school and a mosque have been built in New Ilisu and the new houses have modern kitchens and bathrooms with running water.⁷⁶ The move to New Ilisu has had a detrimental effect on social structures, and there is no community meeting area for women to come together or to celebrate weddings. Women in Ilisu traditionally spent a lot of time together in their kitchens, preparing food. Their smaller kitchens and homes in the new village make it impossible to host the extended family.⁷⁷ Women also often look after their family's financial affairs, but say they were not consulted about the expropriation or resettlement process.

Other displacement and resettlement experiences

The experiences of resettlement to New Ilisu reflect those of people displaced by earlier nearby GAP dam projects. When European governments and their ECAs reconsidered financing the Ilisu project in 2005, a number of fact-finding missions by sociologists and NGOs assessed the fate of such groups at the end of the 1990s.⁷⁸ The main adverse impacts related to compensation, housing, livelihoods, health and community, and women appeared disproportionately affected.

Most dam affected people received little or no compensation, and any payments were often only forthcoming after long legal battles. Almost without exception compensation was only paid to men. Women became more isolated and lacked social support networks, and some said their husbands had married a second wife in Istanbul.⁷⁹ They had previously played central roles in holding their communities together, raising children, caring for the ill and elderly, fetching water, growing and preparing food, tending livestock, organising weddings and other community events and helping to preserve traditional customs and festivities.⁸⁰

Given the difficult economic situation and lack of employment opportunities in the region, the living standards of those evicted deteriorated rapidly after their displacement. Most had no choice but to live with relatives or in slum-like conditions in south-east Turkey's larger cities. These were ill-equipped to receive more displaced people in addition to those who had fled the conflict and informal settlements began to spread. Health workers reported that many of those evicted suffered psychological impacts from the trauma of being uprooted.⁸¹

Cultural heritage

For many residents, Hasankeyf and the surrounding area, with its millenia of history, is a potent symbol of their identity. Many archaeologists and other organisations worldwide have long advocated to save the town from inundation. The Turkish government eventually reacted to these demands with plans to move some artefacts and preserve those that cannot be moved in an underwater tourism centre that will host diving activities and watersports.⁸²

In December 2016, 20 national and international NGOs expressed their strong opposition to the government's deci-



Minaret of the El Rizk Camii mosque in Hasankeyf. When the Ilisu Dam is complete, water levels are expected to reach the minaret's upper balcony. (Photo: Christine Eberlein)

sion to move the 600-year-old Zeynel Bey mausoleum. They believe that moving the tomb from the Tigris river plain onto sloping higher ground where it will stand close to modern structures and architectural reconstructions is an inappropriate and unnecessarily risky undertaking.⁸³

Toward protection and solutions

The Ilisu project is not yet complete, but along with Turkey's previous experience of displacement caused by the construction of dams, it has already exposed the complexities of the phenomenon. It shows that people can be adversely affected before, during and after displacement, and during the negotiation and implementation phases of the project. It also highlights lessons likely to be relevant to other dam construction projects worldwide, including the importance of:

- Protecting those affected during expropriation, displacement and resettlement processes in line with international standards, including meaningful consultation
- In-depth socioeconomic data on all those to be displaced and resettled, the monitoring of their situation after their displacement and the implementation of measures to ensure they recover fully from the upheaval
- An independent monitoring and implementation unit that includes representatives of those affected to help ensure that displacement and resettlement is carried out in line with international human rights standards

- Sufficient institutional capacity and coordination to plan properly for the anticipated scale of resettlement and provision of the necessary human and financial resources to ensure it is carried out effectively
- A plan and procedures for timely compensation decisions, direct payments and a land-for-land and house-for-house approach that are in place and funded before construction starts

Significant displacement and resettlement is on the horizon as the completion of the Ilisu dam draws near, and there is still an opportunity for Turkey to take stock of lessons learned and address the adverse consequences of the expropriation, displacement and resettlement required to make way for the dam. Development should be equitable and inclusive, but to date the resettlement associated with the Ilisu project has run counter to this ethos. Ensuring that those displaced and other people affected by the dam are able to re-establish their lives as soon as possible will benefit them, their families and communities and society as a whole by reinforcing rather than undermining Turkey's development objectives.

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Cover photo: A view of Hasankeyf II, where the proposed future of the locals lies. However, not everyone can afford the modern apartments. (Picture: Stefan Pangritz)

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