



PRESS RELEASE

(For Immediate Release)

1st February 2021

ALLEGED THREATS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST PEOPLE LIVING IN THE BATOKA GORGE HYDRO-ELECTRIC SCHEME (BGHES) PROJECT AREA

The Zambezi River Authority (Authority), is a Bi-National organization mandated by the Governments of the Republics of Zambia and Zimbabwe to sustainably harness the hydropower potential offered by the waters of the Zambezi River for socio-economic and industrial development of the two countries.

The Authority has received reports of alleged threats of violence against people living in the Project Area by people of Influence who are opposed to, or questioning the implementation of the BGHES Project. The Authority takes such allegations very seriously and has carried out preliminary investigations on these claims. We wish to outrightly and categorically refute the allegations as there is no evidence of such actions. As an organization that is concerned about the welfare of all its stakeholders, the Authority will continue investigating the matter and share an update on the same at an opportune time.

The Authority has been, and will continue, to work with the local leadership in the Project Area who keep the Authority Management abreast of any suspicious developments on the ground. In November 2020, the local leadership in Hwange alerted the Authority of some unscrupulous individuals that were swindling locals of their hard-earned money by claiming to be recruitment agents for the Authority. The Authority without hesitation swung into action to investigate and address the matter.

While stakeholders who may be opposed to the project are encouraged to exercise their freedom of expression, we wish to request that stakeholders report facts backed by evidence. The Authority welcomes objective and founded concerns that should be ironed out prior to laying the foundation for a successful Project that will bring about social and economic transformation to the peoples of the two Republics.

It is also noteworthy that in as much as the proposed BGHES Project is a joint venture of the Governments of Zambia and Zimbabwe, the Zambezi River Authority, being the

implementing agent, encourages all stakeholders to share any concerns; positive or negative about the project without being malicious, without fear and without intimidation. If for whatever reasons people are not confident of reporting alleged violence, that may arise in future, to local police stations or local traditional and government leadership, they are free to escalate them to the Authority.

Finally, the Authority wishes to express its gratitude to all stakeholders who submitted comments and concerns pertaining to the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) and the implementation of the Project by 25th January 2021. These concerns, together with a response from the Project team will be documented and be part of the ESIA's report which will be compiled by the ESIA Consultant, Environmental Resources Management (ERM) for submission to the National Environmental Authorities (EMA and ZEMA) for their consideration.



.....
ENG. MUNYARADZI. C. MUNODAWAFA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

-END-

Issued by:

Fitzgerald Muchindu
Public Relations and Communications Officer
Lusaka, Zambia.
Email: pr@zambezi.org
Cell: +(260) 978 731 621
<http://www.zambezi.org/>