



# The Organization to Conserve the Albanian Alps TOKA

Press Release

05 March 2018

## **Criminal Charges Filed Today Against the Falsification of Signatures of local inhabitants during public consultations in 2013**

Today, thirty inhabitants of the village of Dragobi and The Organization to Conserve the Albanian Alps (TOKA) have signed and submitted criminal charges for falsification of the signatures of villagers of Dragobi in 2013.

The charge has been brought against Adem Metailaj, the head of village Dragobi, and against Artila Ulaj, as administrator of company DRAGOBIA SHPK, the two officials who personally guaranteed the validity of signatures of attendees of the purported public consultation. Criminal charges were submitted today on March 05, 2018 at 13:00 hours at the prosecution office in Judicial District Court of Tropoja.

The violation of the law happened on 03 April 2013 during a mandatory public consultation period where the representative of the company and the village leader seem to have **falsified meeting minutes** for a public consultation. There are serious doubts that this meeting with inhabitants ever took place, with doubts over many signatures. The most conclusive violation of the law, however, is when signatures were **falsified for two people that were dead** at the time they signed.

**Meeting minutes are signed by the deceased Ram Aliaj, who died on 05 April 2010 and by the deceased Adem Demiri, who died on 12 May 2000. Both cases are verified with death certificates.**

This is a serious violation of the law which can lead to a sentence of up to 4 years in prison.

In order to obtain a construction permit to build a hydropower plant, developers are obliged to secure an environmental permit and undertake an environmental impact assessment. According to the international convention signed by Albania in 1998 known as the Aarhus Convention, the public must have: the right to full information, the right to participation in decision making and the right to judicial recourse for all projects affecting their environment. This includes the right to an inclusive and transparent public consultation process.

END

For more information contact: Catherine Bohne, OJF TOKA +355 (0)67 30 14 638,  
[catherine@journeytoalbona.com](mailto:catherine@journeytoalbona.com)