

# DEFENDING THE RIONI VALLEY: CIVIC RESISTANCE TO CORPORATE TAKEOVER IN WESTERN GEORGIA

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This article presents an example of civic resistance to the construction of a giant hydropower plant (HPP) in the Republic of Georgia. Extractive economic and political institutions, the primary sources for spreading poverty and conflict in the developing world, survive and prosper because they are supported and encouraged by international entities such as multinational corporations, international financial institutions, and the governments of wealthy nations. The new hydropower plant threatened the Rioni Valley in western Georgia with large-scale ecological destruction and the extraction of natural and human resources. The opposition movement to the plan unified civic groups that represented the broadest political representation in the country. The civic opposition successfully halted an international megaproject through joint effort and by employing peaceful means only.

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## INTRODUCTION

The neoliberal model of economic production is not sustainable because of the growing global population and increased competition worldwide for the means of production. Our planetary resources cannot support the ever-increasing thirst for energy, land, water, and raw materials. Predictions for 2030 suggest that global consumption is likely to increase over 2016