



SOCAR/15-1000/22-10-000003

SOCAR

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Dear [REDACTED]

As a Trustee of Global Witness, we know you take very seriously the manner in which Global Witness conducts its investigations. The Global Witness report, Azerbaijan Anonymous, contains erroneous and unsubstantiated allegations which remain uncorrected despite requests to meet with Global Witness and despite the publication of full explanations on our website: www.azerbaijananonymousexplained.com. We understand that Global Witness intends to publish a second report in the coming months.

The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) is a global standard for transparency in Oil, Gas and Mining. EITI is a voluntary commitment by a global coalition of governments, companies and civil society to work together towards openness and accountable management of revenues from natural resources.

The State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR) has been a party to EITI since the beginning. SOCAR has always supported the transparency initiative and was one of the first companies to join. By taking a prominent role, SOCAR has demonstrated its commitment to the initiative and the company aims to help the EITI be better implemented in Azerbaijan.

SOCAR remains a firm supporter of the EITI programme and recognises its important contribution to Azerbaijan's desire to maintain the country's leadership position in the region. Given this commitment we were surprised and disappointed that Global Witness, an international NGO, produced the highly misleading report "Azerbaijan Anonymous" on 9 December 2013, based on prejudiced and inaccurate information.

We believe that Global Witness, which claims to deliver hard-hitting investigations into issues of public interest, has created a report which wrongfully criticises SOCAR and in fact misleads the public. The report is based on the highly selective interpretation of documentation and the careful formulation of superficial questions to create the impression of wrongdoing.

The laws of Azerbaijan which govern procurement and production sharing agreements are publicly available (as commented on and analysed in the KPMG Report available on SOCAR's official website). However, Global Witness chose to ignore this material and repeatedly raised the issue of public tendering for the sole purpose of creating a negative impression of SOCAR's business activities.

SOCAR has created a specific website referred to above which covers all the “issues” raised by Global Witness to remove any supposed secrecy and confusion about the way SOCAR conducts its business in Azerbaijan and abroad. It is hoped that after reading this information, any observer will be able to draw their own conclusions about SOCAR’s business ethics and also question the motivation behind Global Witness publishing such an outrageous report. We attempted to engage, have provided this material to Global Witness and have requested details of the actions they propose to correct this slur on the reputation of SOCAR, but in correspondence they wished to repeat questions we have already answered and emphasise on rather political issues that are beyond SOCAR’s competence.

We suspect that the only purpose of the production of such an inaccurate report by Global Witness is to use SOCAR as a means to attack the EITI process in Azerbaijan based on groundless critical comments regarding so-called Human Rights ‘problems’ within the country. Therefore Global Witness displays a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of SOCAR, which is a commercial and not political entity.

We believe that the use of an unwarranted, misleading and inaccurate report against SOCAR to further the Global Witness’ position is wrong and an abuse of the EITI principles.

Given that the second report is being prepared by Global Witness despite its failure to rectify the inaccuracies of the first report based on all the information provided during the engagement between SOCAR and Global Witness, we consider that you have a responsibility to address the way in which Global Witness conducts its investigations. If Global Witness continues to operate in this manner and continues to make unfounded accusations, it brings into question the credibility of the organisation.

Sincerely yours,



Eldar Orujov

Head of Legal Department

State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic