



Intimidation of East Aman Society for Environmental Protection



IPP4 Al-Manakher Power Plant



Jordan



Power plant



EBRD, OPIC

On September 8, 2015, Mr. Farhan Al-Daboubi, the chairman of the Jordanian advocacy group, the East Amman Society for Environmental Protection (EASEP), received a call from an officer at the local police station requesting that he come to the station. As he reports, at the meeting, the officer showed him a thick file which the officer claimed included a complaint lodged by the manager of the IPP4 power plant in East Amman, alleging that Mr. Al-Daboubi had harassed and threatened him.¹ The officer also claimed that the file contained a copy of a complaint that EASEP had recently filed with the Project Complaint Mechanism of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD-PCM) on behalf of 91 residents in East Amman, regarding the negative environmental and social impacts of the plant.² The officer reportedly threatened Mr. Al-Daboubi that he would be charged under the Jordanian Communications Law for communicating false information to obstruct an investment in the country.³

On November 24, 2015, Mr. Al-Daboubi was again asked to report to another police station. Upon doing so, he says he was taken to the office of the governor of Amman, where he was again detained and questioned about the complaint filed with the EBRD-PCM. Mr. Al-Daboubi was reportedly pressured to sign a pledge committing not to communicate with any international institutions regarding the power plant.⁴ He reports being told that if he did not sign the pledge, he would have to pay US\$70,000 in order to be released.⁵ Following a protest by 200 local community members and leaders of Jordanian civil society, Farhan was released the following day.

The IPP4 is a 240 megawatt power plant operated by AES Levant Jordan. The plant, which was constructed in 2013, is located near the village of Al-Manakher in East Amman. AES Levant is owned jointly by the US-based AES Baltic Holdings B.V, and Japanese Mitsui & Company Ltd. The IPP4 plant was funded through



Community protest against IPP4.



a US\$100 million loan from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in 2012, and a US\$270 million loan from the US Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) in 2013.⁶

Residents in the vicinity of IPP4 felt they were not adequately informed about the potential environmental impacts of the plant or the proposed mitigation measures, nor properly consulted.⁷ They were especially worried about potential soil and water contamination, and the adverse effects plant emissions could have on their health.⁸ Residents were also concerned that the plant would not create employment opportunities for the local population. EASEP, on behalf of its members, raised those concerns with EBRD, OPIC and various Jordanian government bodies including the Ministry of Environment. On August 3, 2015, EASEP filed a complaint with the EBRD-PCM.⁹

While the complaint process was proceeding, OPIC and EBRD conducted monitoring visits and met with Mr. Al-Daboubi.¹⁰

In November, as the PCM was assessing the eligibility of EASEP's complaint, Al-Daboubi informed them that he was subject to the threat of arrest because of his complaint to the PCM. PCM reports that this information was shared with EBRD officials. Later that month, when Al-Daboubi was in fact detained by Jordanian authorities, PCM reports that they alerted

EBRD senior management, including the head of the EBRD Resident Office in Amman.¹¹

EBRD states that “even though we were not aware of the motivations for his arrest and detention, and whether they were connected to the IPP4 or any other EBRD project, we initiated regular contact with the Client and the Jordanian authorities regarding this situation, and we made it clear that we strongly supported Mr. Al-Daboubi's right to freely express his views in relation to IPP4.”¹²

After his release in November 2015, Mr. Al-Daboubi reports that he continued to experience harassment by AES Levant and local government officials. EBRD states that they were not aware of their client's role in any intimidation of Mr. Al-Daboubi and AES Levant denies the allegation.

In December 2016, the PCM released its investigation report, which concluded that the IPP4 project was in compliance with EBRD policies.¹³ Today, EASEP continues to advocate for the rights of residents around the plant who are struggling with environmental contamination from various sources. Al-Daboubi notes that since his detention this work has become even more difficult as the organization has lost members who feared that they would lose their jobs or expose themselves to danger if they continued to cooperate with EASEP.¹⁴

Endnotes

- 1 Phone Interview of Farhan Al-Daboubi (EASEP) by Amy Ekdawi (consultant) on March 30, 2018.
- 2 Compliance Review Report, IPP4 Al-Manakher Power Project, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, December 2016, <http://www.ebrd.com/cs/Satellite?c=Content&cid=1395254359284&d=&pagename=EBRD%2FContent%2FDownloadDocument>.
- 3 Phone Interview of Farhan Al-Daboubi (EASEP) by Amy Ekdawi (consultant) on March 30, 2018.
- 4 Letter from Dante Pesce et al. to Mr. Rahman, "Internal Communication Clearance Form," February 16, 2016, [https://spdb.ohchr.org/hrdb/32nd/public_-_AL_OTH_16.02.16_\(1.2016\).pdf](https://spdb.ohchr.org/hrdb/32nd/public_-_AL_OTH_16.02.16_(1.2016).pdf).
- 5 Phone Interview of Farhan Al-Daboubi (EASEP) by Amy Ekdawi (consultant) on March 30, 2018.
- 6 AES Levant Plant Information Summary, Section 1: Non-Confidential Project Information, Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), <https://www.opic.gov/sites/default/files/files/aes-levant-plant-info-summary.pdf>; "IPP4 Al-Manakher Power Project," European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 2012, <http://www.ebrd.com/work-with-us/projects/psd/ipp4-al-manakher-power-project.html>.
- 7 Compliance Review Report, IPP4 Al-Manakher Power Project, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, December 2016, <http://www.ebrd.com/cs/Satellite?c=Content&cid=1395254359284&d=&pagename=EBRD%2FContent%2FDownloadDocument>.
- 8 Compliance Review Report, IPP4 Al-Manakher Power Project, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, December 2016, <http://www.ebrd.com/cs/Satellite?c=Content&cid=1395254359284&d=&pagename=EBRD%2FContent%2FDownloadDocument>.
- 9 Project Complaint to EBRD Project Complaint Mechanism from East Amman Society for Environmental Protection(EASEP)/chairman & Farhan Isaa Ahmed Al-Daboubi & all members of EASEP, August 2, 2015, <https://www.ebrd.com/cs/Satellite?c=Content&cid=1395245816929&d=&pagename=EBRD%2FContent%2FDownloadDocument>.
- 10 OPIC and EBRD response to request for comment, on file with authors.
- 11 EBRD-PCM response to request for comment, on file with authors.
- 12 EBRD response to request for comment, on file with authors.
- 13 Compliance Review Report, IPP4 Al-Manakher Power Project Request Number: 2015/02, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, December 2016, <http://www.ebrd.com/cs/Satellite?c=Content&cid=1395254359284&d=&pagename=EBRD%2FContent%2FDownloadDocument>.
- 14 Phone Interview of Farhan Al-Daboubi (EASEP) by Amy Ekdawi (consultant) on March 30, 2018.