

# Open Letter to Bresser: Failed test run - Stop relocation of Zeynel Bey Tomb!

+++ Initiative to Keep Hasankeyf Alive +++ Hasankeyf Matters  
+++ Mesopotamian Ecology Movement +++ Save the Tigris and  
Iraqi Marshes Campaign +++ Humat Dijla, Baghdad +++

**Failed test run shows impossibility of relocation of Zeynel  
Bey Tomb in Hasankeyf!**

**Stop the relocation project!**



4 May 2017

**Open letter to:**

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Dear Mr. Taco Bresser

Dear Mr. Ercan Tunç

Dear Mr. Burhan Çetin

The test conducted at the end of April 2017 for the planned relocation of the Zeynel Bey Tomb in Hasankeyf has failed. This failure demonstrates the severe threats with which the cultural heritage of Hasankeyf is faced due to the ongoing construction of the Ilisu Dam and Hydroelectric Power Plant Project.

We demand in the strongest possible terms that you cease work immediately and withdraw from the project to relocate the Zeynel Bey Tomb. We cite again the ongoing case in the

European Court of Human Rights, where Turkey's plan for cultural heritage conservation in Hasankeyf is disputed.

It is unacceptable that adequate measures were not taken to ensure that the test would be successful in the first attempt. This situation is especially disturbing after repeated assertions (both public and private) that there is no risk in this project.

Numerous inconsistencies and contradictions point to the fact that the planning for this project is flawed and that the risks of damage are higher than you have acknowledged:

- For years authorities have told the public that the tomb would be moved on rails, but within the last months the plan has changed and the tomb is to be moved by means of a trailer moving along a specially constructed road
- The timing of the move has been rushed, raising the likelihood of mistakes. The move was announced for April 18, but asphaltting did not begin until the following week
- The 2 km distance over which the tomb is to be moved is extraordinarily long, with a significant incline, and the goal to move the structure within a single day is highly risky
- Over the past two years, there have been conflicting statements about the new location of the tomb.
- The encasement of the structure in concrete is a fundamentally destructive approach, as it changes the building significantly even while it stands on its original foundation
- The total weight moved during the test is 750 tons, but the weight of the tomb is estimated to be approximately 900 tons

- Rather than seeking to build trust with the public by sharing information and seeking the views and opinions of the local people, this project is shrouded in secrecy. There is not even a statement of work displayed at the site. The lack of transparency raises the risks of the project, as it precludes adequate vetting of the technical plans to ensure that all flaws and vulnerabilities have been addressed.



Individuals and civil society organizations all over the world express regularly their opposition to the planned flooding of Hasankeyf and the surrounding Tigris Valley. In order to raise the awareness about the risks of the planned relocation of the Zeynel Bey Tomb, [Humat Dijla/Tigris Keepers Association](#) in Baghdad has started a campaign in Iraq, which is also severely threatened by the Ilisu Project.

The relocation of the Zeynel Bey Tomb would be an unforgivable act of cultural heritage destruction and a violation of the human rights of the local people. We hold your firms

accountable for your part in the violation of Turkish law and the common international standards governing historic preservation and sustainable development.

We demand the cancellation of the project to relocate the Zeynel Bey Tomb, the immediate stop of the Ilisu Project and a broad discussion among all stakeholders to establish a consensus for socio-cultural development in the region.

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