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Re: Wolf hunt in Norway

Dear Mrs Prime Minister

Dear Minister of Climate and Environment

Our organisation, on behalf of concerned citizens in, would like express our protest against extensive shooting of wolves in Norway this autumn and winter and to call upon the Norwegian government to show to the international community that it is willing to take care of the wolf population on Norwegian territory for future generations.

It is extremely worrisome to learn that after having killed 31 wolves (including two healthy wolf packs) last year, the regional wildlife management boards have decided to shoot another **43 wolves in Norway**. This includes extermination of three wolf packs within the wolf zone – Slettås (7 wolves), Mangelen (6 wolves) and Hobøl (4 wolves). The Ministry of Climate and Environment in Norway has already decided to allow the killing of up to 26 wolves outside the so-called wolf zone this autumn and winter. The hunt started on 1 October. We are deeply concerned about this development, considering that the Swedish authorities have not allowed hunting of any wolves this winter due to the reduction of the wolf population by 26% on the Swedish territory since 2014/2015.

According to reports, most wolves that are found outside the wolf zone in Norway are wandering wolves originating in Sweden, and vice versa, most wolves that are born in Norway and leave their pack to find their own territory, head to Sweden. In light of this fact, it is incomprehensible to us how can Norwegian authorities act in such stark contrast to the decision by the Swedish authorities, especially as the government claims to use the Scandinavian wolf population as the basis for its decisions. The current situation also highlights that Norwegian authorities, by basing their management of the wolf on the population goal of 4-6 wolf litters per year as the maximum allowed, has no basis in scientific assessments of what is actually needed to keep the wolf population from becoming extinct.

It is especially difficult to understand the logic behind killing healthy wolf packs that are established within the wolf zone and that have caused no or only minimal damage to sheep farmers. As wolves are territorial animals, then the presence of wolf packs will have the effect of preventing other wandering wolves to move into the area. Hunting in a group makes it possible for wolves to specialize on their natural prey –

deer and in some cases elk/moose. This will also considerably reduce the risk of wolves targeting domestic animals, such as sheep. In addition, large carnivores help to keep the forest ecosystems healthy.

We believe that the wish to keep the wolf zone from becoming a wolf reserve has no legal basis in the Bern Convention, considering that the wolf zone constitutes only 5% of the Norwegian territory. Not to mention that this fact alone contributes to the extreme level of inbreeding among the Scandinavian wolf population.

A policy that is aimed at keeping the critically endangered wolf permanently on the verge of extinction and as weak as possible is not something we would associate with Norway. It is especially worrying in light of the ongoing mass extinction of species on Earth – the fastest in the history of the planet. It is therefore essential to preserve large carnivores as keystone species and as part of our common natural heritage and legacy.

If the decision of the regional wildlife management board on the killing of three wolf packs will be upheld by the Ministry of Climate and the Environment, then **half of the wolf population found on Norwegian territory shall be exterminated**. This would in all likelihood also reduce the Scandinavian wolf population under the threshold of 300 animals that has been set by the Swedish authorities as the absolute minimum. In our understanding this scenario would also mean that Norway will have failed to uphold its responsibility to the international community to take care of endangered wild animals found on its territory.

We encourage the Prime Minister not to be guided by short-term economic and political interests and populist concerns, especially as the law here stands on the side of nature and wild animals.

We call upon the Norwegian government not to relent to the pressure of certain interest groups to keep the wolf out. We call upon the central government to affirm its commitment to the law and to preserving biological diversity and respecting wildlife.

We plea to you, the Prime Minister of Norway, and the Minister of Climate and the Environment not to allow hunting of wolves within the area designated as the wolf zone this winter.

Yours Sincerely,

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