

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LEBANON
HIS EXCELLENCY GENERAL MICHEL AOUN
Baabda Palace
Lebanon

Dear Mr. President, Your Excellency General Michel Naim Aoun,

With just a few weeks until the start of the spring migration in this Year of the Bird, we are writing to You in the name of the Facebook group SOS Tesla – Save White Storks, as well as all the below signed organisations and groups from across Europe, and indeed the world.

During last year's spring migration we were witness to many photographs and videos depicting massacres of migratory birds in Lebanon. Among the thousands of birds killed was Tesla, a white stork from Croatia, equipped with a GPS device. His death brought together bird-loving enthusiasts, bird protection activists and ornithologists from a host of countries in Europe and the Middle East to launch a petition, 'Make the sky over Lebanon safe for storks and other migrating birds', addressed to You, Mr. President, and Your Minister of the Environment.

Bird protection activists from all over Europe, and others across the world, followed with great interest the subsequent efforts and actions taken to prepare and begin the application of the Hunting Law in September last year, and were very hopeful that it would be strictly implemented. Unfortunately, in the meantime, there have been further examples in which it can clearly be seen that poachers have continued to kill birds that it is prohibited to hunt, even before the opening of the hunting season and in disturbingly large numbers – merely for fun.

Now it is almost time for this year's spring migration to start we are deeply worried for the safety of the birds whose return to Europe we so eagerly await. The vast majority of those in the eastern sector of the Africa–Eurasia flyway system will take the route over Lebanon. That is why we are sending You this unified appeal from all those organisations listed below as

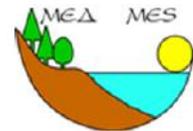
signatories to this letter which, together, are kindly asking You, Mr. President, to ensure that, this spring, shooting at protected species will be prevented and that the birds will have full protection while flying over Lebanon, as they should have according to the Law.

We were delighted when You, Mr. President, a year ago said: 'There should be a Peace Treaty between Man and the tree as well as Man and birds, because we continue to transgress upon them.' We are counting on this Peace Treaty because we believe that birds don't belong to any nation, but that all nations are obliged to protect them for tomorrow's children of all nations. Therefore, we hope that, at the close of the hunting season this year, we will see this Peace Treaty with trees and birds become a reality and that You, Mr. President, will make sure that the Law is applied strictly and consistently so that all cases reported to the authorities are fully investigated, all poachers already accused are brought to justice – as well as their accomplices, instigators and accessories in the killing of protected species – and all available appropriate measures are applied and enforced to ensure that shooting at protected species is prevented, and that birds that are protected in their home countries in Europe are also protected while flying over Lebanon, as they should be according to the Law.

We believe that You will persevere in the strong protection of migrating birds and our eyes are turned towards Lebanon this spring with hope. With hope that birds will have a free and safe flyway and that Lebanon will become a shining example in the field of bird protection.

Dear Mr. President, please make the sky over Lebanon safe for migratory birds this spring!

We thank You in advance.



SOS Tesla – Save White Storks – Facebook Group
 Prosveta Community Centre Belozem – Bulgaria
 LEylekEL (Storkland) – Facebook Group
 Stork Exchange – Facebook Group
 Čigoč – First European Stork Village – Croatia