

Update for the legal battle regarding the incident that happened on 26/12/2018 in Evia, between us and a hunter, which was spread by the media under the title: “a couple of ecologists attacked a hunter and took his shotgun”.

The incident concerns a conflict with a hunter who was exercising his favorite “hobby”. In our attempt to prevent him from murdering an animal, and after repeatedly asking him to stop and leave, tension followed and the result was a shotgun thrown somewhere in the woods. After leaving the spot asap, trying to get away from the furious hunter, we got pulled over by several police vehicles and we were arrested. At the police department they announced us that we were charged with robbery which is a felony and cell phone theft that is a misdemeanor. Of course, if someone looks at the legal definition of robbery, he/she will understand that this accusation has nothing to do with our action as we had no intention of appropriating the shotgun. The hunter himself admitted that the whole dispute focused on his “fun activity” and that our motives were “ecological”. In addition, the gun was later found at the place it was thrown away. The theft accusation makes no sense as well. Not only the mobile phone wasn't found on us, but it's also obvious that the last thing we wanted to do at that moment would be to steal the hunter's phone.

It must be noted that an important role in the legal case has been played by the local hunting club, of Istiaia and the D' Hunting Federation of Central Greece (D' KOSE), as they pay for the legal costs, as well as provide the legal representation for the case. This is obviously not a surprise as it is not a surprise either that, as stated by the D ' KOSE in their announcement, “they will do everything possible for the exemplary punishment of the perpetrators”. The same also states the president of the local hunting club of Istiaia, who published an announcement full of lies about the case. In addition, indicative is the passion of the hunting press, both the printed and the digital ones, which rushed to escalate the issue from the first moment, posting articles and photos of the hunter and congratulating him on his “calm” attitude. Moreover, they tried to victimize him using even his age and presenting him as a lovely old man who, while out for his usual walk, at which he happens to carry a gun and murder, fell the “absurd” victim to two violent and ruthless perpetrators. Clearly, if we're going to talk about victims and perpetrators, the only victims in this particular case are the animals and we don't understand how is preventing a murder making us “extremists” and turns the killer from a perpetrator into a victim.

Furthermore, we don't consider neither the absurd accusations proposed by the police against us nor the fact that they were accepted by the prosecutor to be a random incident as we clearly deal with vengeful charges that have nothing to do with what actually happened. After all, the general affectionate relationship between the state and the hunters is not hidden. This relationship between hunters and state, ministries and party mechanisms is also evident by the close connection between hunting clubs and the state with examples like that of the cooperation between the Ministry of Environment and Energy & Climate Change and the D ' KOSE, the VI Hunting Federation Macedonia - Thrace, the ST' Hunting Federation of Peloponnese and others. This relationship is sometimes expressed by the presence of parliament members and party representatives at the various events organized by hunting clubs, a fact that they make sure to spread by posting articles and photos on their websites. Finally, the influence of hunting clubs in parliament-passed laws on hunting, such as on the annual regulatory authority, is widely known. In addition, hunters also threaten political parties sometimes by stating that they will not vote in elections as hunting clubs have as members a significant number of voters. It is also indicative that during Christmas while the state had imposed a strict lockdown that banned most human public activity, it allowed the hunters to go hunting.

Of course, to be fair, we must say that hunters don't seem to behave abhorrently just to - and devalue the lives of only - non-human animals, as we don't forget that they were on the front line at the greek borders where they exercised their favorite sport hunting immigrants. A fact that also doesn't surprise us, considering that the logic of underestimating a life as inferior and -based on that- justifying the violence against it is not limited to non-human animals but instead it can easily be used against humans as well, as we can see repeatedly in history.

More specifically about our trial, which was set two years later on 28.01.2021 at the Single Felony Court of Appeal in Chalkida, what we want to make clear is that in this trial we are not primarily judged as people who committed the lies that they accuse us of. We are judged as individuals who opposed the murder of animals and thus challenged the right of hunters and their associations to kill. This is why they ask for our exemplary punishment. Evident is the fact that the statements of the local hunting club president contradict each other as he first implies that we staged the whole incident in order to extract a hunting shotgun for "other uses" and then he admits that the incident is not only a concern for the specific hunter but for the whole "hunting family" who is under attack by "absurd" people.

So, clarifying our position in relation to the incident, we state that what we did, that is, our attempt to protect an animal from being murdered, was an instinctive move that in our opinion should be the obvious thing to do for everyone. However, unfortunately we live in a society with laws that allow animal killing and on the contrary criminalize actions which are trying to protect lives. But something being legal doesn't make it also fair or moral. In the same way that even though slavery was legal in the past, this does not mean that slavery is fair and ethical.

We ask from people and groups who share our views and want to, to express their solidarity with us in any way they like. We hope that someday hunting, but also all the brutal actions animals are subjected to, will stop being socially acceptable and the laws allowing them will be thrown in the trash. Until then, let's all of us stand, individually and collectively against hunting, the sport of murderers.

NO LIFE, HUMAN OR NOT IS EXPENDABLE HUNTING IS NOT A HOBBY, IT IS MURDER

Dimitra and Thodoris, 08/01/2021