

DR. CAROLINE LUCAS

Green Party
for the South East of England

HE Mr Yury Viktorovich Fedotov
Embassy of the Russian Federation
6/7 Kensington Palace Gardens
London W8 4QP

March 6th 2009

Dear Ambassador,

I understand that the annual seal slaughter in Northern Russia, in the regions of Arkhangelsk and Murmansk at the White Sea and the Barents Sea, is scheduled to begin next week. I also understand that, as the result of an agreement between the Russian government and the private sector, more than 6 times the number of seals will be slaughtered than in years prior to 2007. Figures from 2008 indicate that over 140,000 seal cubs were killed that year.

Russia's Ministry of Natural Resources, animal welfare organisations and large numbers of the Russian public have expressed opposition to the slaughter. I am writing to add my voice to this campaign and call on Russia to immediately halt the seal slaughter this year and in future.

Evidence from the ice shows seals, shot and badly injured, gaffed and dragged onto boats, mandatory checks to ensure seals were dead rarely being carried out, and seals brutally clubbed multiple times because the first strike was ineffective. Film footage also shows that pups are also often struck repeatedly before being rendered unconscious, and that they may even be skinned alive. This killing of pups, as is well documented, takes place as mother seals watch helplessly.

If Russia allows such barbarity and cruelty to take places on its shores yet again, there will be international condemnation. I call on you now to do your utmost to ensure that this does not happen and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



Caroline Lucas - Green Party MEP for South East England.