

**BISHKEK, KYRGYZ REPUBLIC,
August 24 – 25, 2017**

**To the organizers and participants
of the International Snow Leopard & Ecosystem Forum**
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Copy:
To the strategic partners of the forum:
**United Nations Development Program (UNDP),
World Wildlife Fund (WWF),
Snow Leopard Trust (SLT),
Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU),
Global Environment Fund (GEF),
United States Agency for International Development (USAID).**

Dear organizers and participants of the International Snow Leopard & Ecosystem Forum!

The public of Kazakhstan welcomes the forum participants and expresses support to the efforts of the international community aimed at preserving snow leopards and their habitat!

We share the viewpoint of the forum participants that only joint efforts and strict observance of international conventions and agreements on conservation of biological diversity and protection of endangered species, including snow leopards, can radically change the situation for the better.

At the same time, we are concerned that in the recent years, the Republic of Kazakhstan has not taken adequate measures to fulfil its international obligations. This was clearly demonstrated in 2016, when, in spite of the instructions of the World Heritage Committee and ICOMOS experts, the Talgar site of ancient settlement located near the city of Almaty and included in the World Heritage List, was partially destroyed. Only active intervention of the Chinese party and experts, the World Heritage Committee and the public stopped the further destruction of the monument. However, a threat of the destruction remains.

In 2017, following a statement from the public concerned by destruction of ecological systems of the Ile-Alatau National Park, the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee ruled that Kazakhstan violated a number of provisions of the Convention. The park was established in 1996 with a purpose of preservation of the unique ecosystems and landscapes of Zailiysky Alatau. The lands of the Ile-Alatau State National Park and the adjacent Almaty State Nature Reserve are inhabited by snow leopards. Beauty of the mountain landscapes, rich flora and fauna became a reason for inclusion of the national park into the 2002 Tentative List of sites nominated by the Republic of Kazakhstan to the World Heritage List.

Despite the obvious socio-ecological and economic advisability of preserving the Ile-Alatau National Park, during the last fifteen years, its territory has been intensively developed. In the natural landmark Chimbulak, tenants of the lands of the national park significantly expanded the territory of the ski resort. As a result of their activity, vegetation and soil are almost completely destroyed on dozens of hectares of mountain slopes, which are the habitat of snow leopards. Numerous traces of erosion have appeared. The destruction of the habitat of snow leopards is accompanied by environmental pollution. Construction development approached the boundaries of the reserve.

The natural landmark Kok-Zhailau was intentionally excluded from the structure of the national park, and it is planned to build a ski resort with hotels, restaurants, shopping and entertainment centres there! The ski tracks are planned to pass snow leopard habitat. More than 16 thousand people have signed an open letter against the construction (http://esgrs.org/?page_id=7239). Despite public protests, despite the fact that in June 2017, the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee acknowledged violation of its requirements during planning of the resort, the construction continues.

We appeal to the participants of the forum to demand the Republic of Kazakhstan to provide guarantees for strict compliance with the obligations under the Aarhus Convention, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the World Heritage Convention. We call for strict observance of the principles of the Bishkek Declaration, in particular:

- **to the joint actions** «of the entire international community, civil society, and private sector» in order to «intensify conservation efforts in the large landscapes required for snow leopard survival by identifying and designating critical habitats of key snow leopard populations as no-go areas for destructive land uses».

See photo, attachment, and maps.

August 22, 2017
Almaty

Signatures:

1. Berkova Nadezhda – Ecological Society “Green Salvation” (Almaty),
2. Krylov Valeriy – Ecological Society “Green Salvation” (Almaty),
3. Kuratov Sergey – Ecological Society “Green Salvation” (Almaty),
4. Medvedeva Nataliya – Ecological Society “Green Salvation” (Almaty),
5. Spatar Svetlana – Ecological Society “Green Salvation” (Almaty),
6. Zhukonova Zhamilya (Almaty),
7. Belkhozayev Nursultan (Almaty),
8. Schreiber Dagmar, Kasachstanreisen (Berlin, Deutschland),
9. Tairova Sofya (Jacksonville, Florida, USA).
10. Zhukov Dmitry (Almaty).

Shymbulak (Ile-Alatau National Park)



Kok-Zhaylau (Ile-Alatau National Park)



