



VIDEO: Sickening animal cruelty at Indonesia's "extreme" markets where dogs and cats are bludgeoned and blow-torched alive

Government urged to take immediate action to safeguard animal welfare and public health and safety

LONDON (23 Jan. 2018) – The Indonesian government is being urged to shut down the country's brutally cruel live animal markets, where thousands of dogs and cats a week are bludgeoned in public, blow-torched whilst still alive, and butchered for eating. Local authorities and tour operators are also being called on to stop promoting the markets as "must see" activities for tourists.

Campaigners from the *Dog Meat-Free Indonesia* coalition filmed at two of the most notorious of Indonesia's 200 'live' animal markets in North Sulawesi, Tomohon Extreme Market and Langowan Market, to expose the horrifying suffering routinely endured by animals. Described by one of the campaigners as "like walking through hell", live dogs and cats are seen huddled together and trembling as all around them their cage mates are slaughtered. One by one they are yanked out of their cage, beaten over the head, and thrown to the ground as they writhe in agony. They are then blow-torched to remove their hair, a final torment that takes place whilst many are clearly still alive.

Lola Webber, Dog Meat-Free Indonesia campaign coordinator & Change For Animals Foundation founder, said *"The animals we saw at the markets were terrified and often sick and injured, after surviving grueling journeys to market and rough handling by traders. It was like walking through hell. They huddled together in cages, trembling with fear as they watched others being killed around them, waiting their turn. The sight of absolute terror in their eyes, the thumping of the club as they were bludgeoned, their screams of pain, and the smell of burning hair and flesh, were appalling and unforgettable."*

Thousands of dogs and cats are killed at the markets in North Sulawesi each week, and investigations by Animal Friends Manado Indonesia estimate that 90 percent of them are stolen pets, owned or street dogs. Some 80 percent of them are imported from other provinces, which is illegal under the country's anti-rabies law forbidding the movement of dogs across provincial borders. North Sulawesi Province has some of the highest numbers of human deaths from rabies in Indonesia, the majority of which occur in Minahasa Regency where there are several live animal markets, including Langowan market.



There is growing evidence that humans increase their risk of becoming infected with the fatal rabies virus through slaughtering and butchering, and the illegal movement of large numbers of animals of unknown disease status into densely-populated areas contravenes rabies elimination recommendations by leading health authorities, including the World Health Organization, the World Organisation for Animal Health, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Kelly O'Meara of Humane Society International said: *"These markets are open displays of the most wanton animal cruelty I have ever seen, but they also pose a serious risk to public health by routinely breaching Indonesia's anti-rabies rules. The ground is awash with blood, bits of flesh and smashed brain-matter. The earth moving with maggots, further increasing the risk of spreading other diseases too. If Indonesia has any hope of achieving its goal to eliminate rabies by 2020, it needs to take urgent action to shut down these macabre markets."*

Shockingly, these extreme markets are promoted as tourist attractions by local authorities and tour operators. Travel site TripAdvisor also listed Tomohon Extreme market as a "must see", but removed the listing following a complaint by the Dog Meat-Free Indonesia coalition, stating that, *"We have investigated the TripAdvisor listing page for Tomohon Extreme Market and concluded that it does not meet the standards set by our listings policy. As a result, we have permanently removed the listing from both our site and our app."*

Karin Franken of Jakarta Animal Aid Network, said: *"Most travelers would be horrified at the promotion of such horrific markets which trivialise the very serious nature of the animal suffering that takes place there. The traders who beat and burn these animals alive show total indifference to their pain and anguish, and even appear to play up to the crowds. It's a sickening display that should never be seen as entertainment."*

Another shocking aspect of the DMFI video evidence is that it shows young children estimated to be between the ages of two and ten years old, watching as animals are beaten to death. Whilst the government of Indonesia looks to promote programs to make "good citizens", experts confirm that exposing children to animal cruelty is psychologically damaging.

Dr. Mary Lou Randour, senior advisor for Animal Cruelty Programs at the Animal Welfare Institute watched DMFI's footage and commented: *"Witnessing violence of any type, particularly animal abuse, is a traumatic event for a child, as it changes how the brain develops. Exposure to violence at a young age can alter neurons, the building blocks of the brain, negatively affecting capacity for emotional regulation, physical health, cognitive capacity, and behavior control. Without a doubt, children who witness the severe beating of dogs in the markets and streets of Indonesia, highly charged traumatic events, would experience long-lasting adverse effects."*



Indonesia relies heavily on tourists from around the world who care deeply about their own beloved pets. More than [10 million tourists a year](#) visit Indonesia, mainly from Singapore (1.6million), Malaysia (1.5million) Europe (1.5 million) China (1.3million) and Australia (1million). Significant numbers of tourists from the UK, North America, India and New Zealand also visit annually (see notes). The DMFI coalition is calling on tourists and animal lovers around the world to join their calls for an outright ban on this illegal, dangerous and brutal trade.

Bobby Fernando of Animal Friends Jogja said: *“People will be shocked by the gruesome nature of the video evidence we have gathered, but we cannot allow ourselves to simply look away. These poor animals have to endure this horror every day, and they have no-one but us to speak up for them. The tourist board’s slogan of a ‘Wonderful Indonesia’ rings hollow when you’ve gazed into the eyes of a dog spattered with blood and shaking with fear. We need the world to join us in calling for an end to Indonesia’s dog and cat meat trade.”*

In addition to live dogs and cats, our investigators witnessed the routine sale of slaughtered wildlife including illegally-caught species of bats, snakes and other reptiles.

The DMFI coalition has written to local and central governments of Indonesia, calling for urgent action to be taken. Despite requests for meetings with North Sulawesi provincial government numerous times, officials have so far refused to meet with our campaigners.

FACTS

- Most people in Indonesia don’t eat dogs and cats. Less than seven percent of the population consume dog meat.
- Studies have revealed a high incidence of rabies-infected dogs in slaughterhouses and markets from throughout Southeast Asia, including Indonesia. For example, in 2007, research conducted in markets in North Sulawesi (Manado, Airmadidi and Langowan) showed that between 7.8 percent and 10.6 percent of dogs being sold for human consumption were infected with rabies.
- DMFI investigators found dog meat on sale at the local Multi Mart chain of supermarkets in Manado, as well as meat from protected species of snake, including reticulated pythons.
- Take action at www.dogmeatfreeindonesia.org by writing to the Indonesian government and signing our petition.

ENDS

Photos and video:



Download photos, broadcast quality broll video footage, and campaign video here:
<https://www.dogmeatfreeindonesia.org/resources/extreme-markets>

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Notes to Editors:

1. The Dog Meat Free Indonesia (DMFI) coalition – founded by Animal Friends Jogja, Change For Animals Foundation, Humane Society International and Jakarta Animals Aid Network – has a shared commitment towards ending the trade in and slaughtering of dogs, and sale of dog meat, based on grounds on animal welfare and public health and safety. Find out more: www.dogmeatfreeindonesia.org
2. [Official data](#) from the tourism ministry of the Republic of Indonesia shows that 10,406,759 foreign tourists visited Indonesia in 2015 (Singapore 1,624,058; Europe 1,462,434; Malaysia 1,458,593; China 1,260,700; Australia 1,099,058; Japan 549,705; India: 319,608; United Kingdom 292,745; United States 276,027; New Zealand: 87,923; Canada 75,816. In 2016, tourism's foreign exchange reached 13.5 million US dollars per year, the country's second largest foreign exchange earner. President Jokowi has targeted the tourist sector to become the largest foreign exchange earner by 2019, creating 13 million jobs, contributing 8% of GDP and with 20 million visitors a year.