Global Call to Action: End rabies in Asia by stopping the dog meat trade

Rabies is a widespread, neglected and underreported disease with 100% mortality rate in animals and humans if not treated early. Every year, between 50,000 and 70,000 people die of rabies in atrocious conditions, with approximately 90% of all human rabies deaths reported from Asia. Sadly, the majority of them are children, and nearly all of the human rabies cases are attributable to exposure to rabid dogs.

The good news is that this deadly disease can be effectively controlled and eradicated through dog vaccination programs. Sustainable vaccination of 70% of at-risk dog populations is recognised as key to eliminating the disease in endemic areas. But vaccinating dogs isn't enough – they must then be cared for and maintained in their communities, restricting the movement of these dogs out of vaccinated communities, so as to effectively form a barrier to the introduction of the disease and stop the re-introduction of the disease.

Unfortunately, tens of millions of dogs are removed from their communities and slaughtered for human consumption each year throughout Asia. As well as being extremely cruel, the dog meat trade is the only trade known to encourage the large-scale, illegal movement of dogs of unknown disease and vaccination status between provinces and international borders, disrupting herd immunity to rabies achieved through mass vaccination programs and facilitating the spread of the disease. Human rabies deaths have also been directly linked to involvement in the slaughtering, butchery, handling and even consumption of meat from infected dogs. Furthermore, these trades are in direct contravention of rabies control and elimination recommendations by key health advisory bodies, including the WHO, PAHO, OIE, CDC, and FAO, as well as in breach of national disease control and prevention regulations, and animal protection laws.

Although dog meat is typically only consumed by a minority of the population, and a growing number of countries and territories across Asia are taking action to ban the trade in dogs and the consumption of dog meat on grounds of animal welfare and public health and safety, as long as governments continue to turn a blind eye to these illegal trades, the whole region's health and welfare remain at risk.

Based on mounting evidence from throughout Asia and on decades of experience in successful rabies elimination programs from around the world, it is undeniable that the dog meat trade and rabies elimination efforts are incompatible, and that cities and countries around the world will never be able to maintain rabies-free statuses without addressing the trade in dogs for human consumption.

We, the global animal protection community, therefore call on the national and regional governments of all countries where the dog meat trade is prevalent to take strong and urgent actions to end the trade in dogs for human consumption and the sale and consumption of such meat and associated products. If we are serious about eradicating human rabies deaths, we have a global responsibility to end the dog and cat meat trade for good.

Signatories to the letter are:

1. Ananta Jyoti Dhayn Kendra
2. Andhra Pradesh Goshalala Federation
3. Animal Friends Jogja
4. Animal Friends Manado
5. Animal Kingdom Foundation
6. Animal Liberation Sanctuary
7. Animal Rescue Cambodia
8. Animal Rights Committee of Georgia
9. Animal Rights Hawaii
10. Animal Sanctuary Trust Indonesia
11. Animals Asia Foundation
12. Bali Animal Welfare Association
13. Bharatiya Prani Mitra Sangh, Hyderabad
14. Blue Cross of Hyderabad
15. British Hen Welfare Trust
16. Capital Animal Welfare Association (China)
17. Change for Animals Foundation
18. Coexistence of Animal Rights on Earth
19. Community Dog Welfare
20. Compassion Works International
21. CPR Environmental Education Centre
22. Department of Livestock Services - Bangladesh
23. Djurrättsalliansen (The Animal Rights Alliance)
24. Dog Meat Free Indonesia
25. Dogstop
26. Environment & Animal Society of Taiwan
27. Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisation (FIAPO)
28. FLIGHT
29. FOUR PAWS International
30. Free the Bears
31. Friends of the Orangutans
32. GAIA (Voice of the Voiceless)
33. Help Animals India
34. HERD
35. Himalayan Animal Rescue Trust
36. Hollow Logs
37. Humane Society International
38. Instituto Pasteur de São Paulo
39. International Animal & Birds Welfare Society
40. International Otter Survival Fund
41. International Primate Protection League
42. Jakarta Animal Aid Network (JAAN)
43. Japan Anti-Vivisection Association
44. JBF (India) Trust
45. Korea Animal Rights Advocates
46. Korean Alliance for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
47. Landmark Foundation
48. Life Conservationist Association
49. Love Animal House Thailand
50. moonbears.org
51. Nepal Street Animal Rescue
52. Nowzad Dogs
53. Orangutan Aid
54. PAWS for Compassion
55. Pecinta Hewan Surabaya
56. People for Animals, Trivandrum
57. PETA Asia 亚洲善待动物组织
58. Philippine Pet Birth Control Foundation, Inc.
59. Plants and Animals Welfare Society (PAWS Asia)
60. Pro Natura Foundation
61. Sahabat Anjing Surakarta
62. Sahayog Organisation, Andhra Pradesh Goshalala Federation, Hyderabad
63. Sanctuary for Health & Reconnection to Animals & Nature
64. Scorpion Foundation Indonesia
65. Showing Animals Respect and Kindness
66. Society for the Protection of Animals Ljubimci
67. Society for Travelers Respecting Animal Welfare (STRAW)
68. Stray Relief and Animal Welfare
69. Sun Bear Centre - Kalimantan
70. Taiwan SPCA台灣防止虐待動物協會
71. The Cattitude Trust - Chennai
72. The Jane Goodall Institute - Global
73. The Kerulos Center Elephant Liberation
74. The Kerulos Center Science in Service to Animals
75. Vietnam Cat Welfare
76. Voice for dogs abroad
77. VShine (China)
78. Wild Futures
79. Wildlife Alliance
80. Wildlife Salvation
81. Working for Animals
82. Zhuzhou Small Animal Protection (China)
83. Zoocheck Inc