



# Indonesia's Dog Meat Trade:

## Campaign briefing

An estimated 30 million dogs are killed for human consumption each year across Asia, in a brutal trade that involves immense animal cruelty. Some 1,000,000 dogs are killed annually in Indonesia alone, captured and stolen to be transported throughout the region to supply the demand for dog meat. Many are stolen family pets and illegally trafficked dogs collected from the streets and rural communities. The Dog Meat-Free Indonesia coalition is founded by four organisations committed to tackling this trade throughout Indonesia.

### **The dog meat trade in Indonesia: A cruel and dangerous trade**

#### **A risk to human and animal health**

The dog meat trade poses a grave health risk to all sectors of society, notably in the form of rabies transmission, given that it is the only known mass and unregulated movement of dogs from different cities, provinces and islands and is in breach of rabies control recommendations from leading human and animal health experts, including the World Health Organization (WHO), World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

The WHO has explicitly highlighted the dog meat trade as a contributing factor to the spread of rabies in Indonesia – a deadly disease that has a devastating impact on human and animal health. Rabies positive dogs are being moved to supply highly-populated cities that are often dog meat eating “hot spots” throughout the nation, including those areas that have worked to secure “rabies-free” status, including the capital city of Jakarta.

The unsanitary conditions of slaughterhouses and the unknown health status of dogs slaughtered for consumption are of added and equal concern, with those involved in the dog meat trade – traders, slaughterers, vendors and consumers – at further risk of being exposed to rabies and other zoonotic diseases.

Although dog meat is only consumed by a minority of Indonesians – estimated at less than 7% – and only a tiny fraction of society are reliant on it as a primary source of income, the dog meat trade threatens the health and safety of the entire nation. If Indonesia is to achieve its goal to eliminate rabies by 2020, urgent action is required by the government and all sectors of society.

## **Inherent animal cruelty**

In addition to grave risks to human and animal health, nationwide investigations have revealed the immense suffering caused to millions of dogs each year: crude and brutal methods of capture, transport and slaughter.

Many dogs used to supply the trade are stolen family pets and illegally trafficked dogs collected from the streets and rural communities. They are crammed into cages and sacks so tightly that they can't move, their mouths bound shut so they can hardly breathe. They are taken on long journeys on bikes or in overcrowded trucks to supply markets, slaughterhouses and restaurants. Many may die from suffocation, dehydration or heatstroke before they reach their final destination. For those who survive, they watch others being brutally killed in filthy slaughterhouses whilst they wait their turn. Their fear is unimaginable.

## **Who eats dog meat?**

Most people in Indonesia don't eat dogs. In some areas, dog meat is considered a traditional type of food, and its consumption is often linked to certain festivities/ events including Thanksgiving and family celebrations such as weddings, baptisms, etc.

As in many other parts of Asia, dog meat is also consumed for its perceived health properties, such as curing skin problems, dengue fever and asthma, as a general boost for the immune system, or improving male stamina. In the area of Solo, for example, dog meat stalls promote dog meat as '*Jamu*' (traditional medicine). Contrary to common misconception, dog meat is not eaten because it is a cheap protein source; in fact it is no more or less expensive than other meats, although its consumption is often associated with that of alcohol.

## **Legislation in Indonesia pertaining to the dog meat trade**

There are no regulations in Indonesian law specifically related to the capture of, trade in, slaughtering or consumption of dogs. However, there are various regulations on consumer safety, violence in public, transportation of livestock animals, animal abuse, theft of animals, as well as farm animal welfare and animal quarantine, that if properly and strictly applied could dramatically reduce and restrict the dog meat trade.

## **Why we are not campaigning for regulation of the dog meat trade**

We campaign for an outright ban on the production and consumption of dog meat because any amount of regulation would fail to resolve the inherent and systematic animal cruelty involved in the trade, and would also fail or alleviate all the risks posed to human health.

By calling for a ban on the dog meat trade, we are not endorsing the production and consumption of other species of animals such as pigs or chickens. We are opposed to the intensive farming of all animals for meat because of the unimaginable cruelty and suffering it causes every year to hundreds of millions of animals, and we are committed to promoting compassion towards all animals all over the world.

We can and should learn from our mistakes. Regulation has not stopped the daily abuse of hundreds

of millions of ‘conventional’ livestock species around the world; in fact, in many cases, regulation has simply institutionalized the systematic use of cruel farming methods. Animals are bred and reared in a system that fails to meet their basic needs and most suffer every day through legalised practices, including many permitted cruel methods of slaughter. Once animals are accepted and classified as ‘livestock’ – as a commodity produced for consumption – their inhumane treatment becomes accepted or overlooked in society. We have a chance to stop that happening for dogs.

In addition, regulating the meat industry has not stopped outbreaks of serious diseases, such as Foot and Mouth, ‘Mad Cow’ and Avian Influenza, which pose an enormous risk to human and animal health.

By calling for regulations to make cages a little bigger, transport to be a little less torturous, and slaughter to be slightly less brutal, we would ultimately prevent bringing about a legal end to the a trade that causes unthinkable suffering and threatens public health and safety. Regulations would not afford the dogs better lives, what is happening now would simply be ‘permitted’, and would only serve to lend legitimacy to an inherently inhumane and dangerous trade.

Regulation is not a step towards banning – they are completely separate legislative tools – and regulating a fundamentally cruel business is not our aim. Once legalised, there would be no turning back from the large-scale production of dog meat, setting a dangerous precedent.

There is an opportunity to stop dogs from becoming another species of animal recognised as “livestock”, thereby offering a unique opportunity to save dogs from the cruelty already being endured by hundreds of millions of other animals every year under permitted practices.

## **Cruelty is not culture**

No culture in any country anywhere in the world should ever be used as an excuse for cruelty. The Dog Meat-Free Indonesia coalition members challenge animal cruelty wherever it occurs, including in Western cultures such as the USA and UK. The dog meat trade is simply a matter of animal cruelty.

Our coalition members work regionally and globally to promote compassion and respect for all animals, and we do not shy away from exposing and challenging practices that cause the suffering of any species of animals anywhere in the world. Whilst we realise that we can’t stop the suffering of all animals for the food industry overnight, we should never use the suffering of one species of animals in one country as an excuse for inaction to stop the suffering of another species in another country. Instead we must strive to make a difference now in those areas where we can, and the dog meat trade is one such area, a particularly cruel trade where we really can make a difference relatively swiftly.

## **Growing opposition to the dog meat trade in Indonesia and globally**

Many countries and territories across Asia have already banned the dog meat trade and/ or consumption of dogs, in recognition of the inherent animal cruelty and risks to human health. Such bans exist in the Philippines, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand and Malaysia, and demand for dog meat is declining throughout the region.

Opposition to the dog meat trade has become increasingly vocal within Indonesia, particularly amongst younger generations, due to the exponential growth in pet ownership and associated concerns for animal welfare. Concerns over the public health and safety risks associated with the

production and consumption of dog meat are increasing for many as well, as is the global political commitment and responsibility to safeguard animals from cruelty.

With concerns being raised around the world by citizens, politicians, celebrities, veterinarians, medical practitioners, and animal welfare experts, it is simply a matter of time before this cruel industry is relegated to the history books.

### **Dog Meat-Free Indonesia Coalition's position statement on the dog meat trade**

Based on the mounting evidence of the risk the dog meat trade poses to human and animal health, the inherent cruelty to dogs and the criminality of the trade, the Dog Meat-Free Indonesia Coalition is resolute in our position that the production and slaughtering of dogs for human consumption must end. We believe that strict enforcement of regulations prohibiting the production, slaughtering and consumption of dogs is required with urgency to safeguard the health and welfare of Indonesia's communities and dogs.

### **About The Dog Meat-Free Indonesia Coalition**

Jakarta Animal Aid Network (JAAN) Change For Animals Foundation (CFAF), Animal Friends Jogja (AFJ) and Humane Society International (HSI) created the "Dog Meat-Free Indonesia" campaign based on a shared commitment to working collaboratively to tackle the dog meat trade in Indonesia through public awareness campaigning, political lobbying and engagement, and on-the-ground practical support as needed.

Through public awareness campaigning and political lobbying, our united goal is to secure public and political opposition towards the dog meat trade throughout Indonesia. With proven experience and expertise in delivering effective public awareness campaigns, and in working in collaboration with local and central governments to pass and implement laws and regulations to end cruel practices and strengthen animal protection legal provisions, we are well positioned to tackle Indonesia's cruel and dangerous dog meat trade.

There is an ever-growing opposition to the dog meat trade in Indonesia and globally, and we are committed to raising the profile of this issue and to ensure the strengthening and enforcement of laws that will end a trade that causes unimaginable suffering to millions of dogs each year, and poses a grave risk to human health and safety.

### **A collaborative and solution-based approach**

We are committed to working with local communities, celebrities and the authorities to raise awareness of the illegal dog meat trade and the risks it poses to both human and animal health, as well as the enormous amount of suffering the trade causes to millions of dogs every year.

We are committed to:

- Highlighting the human health risks associated with the trade in, and consumption of, dogs
- Encouraging a more compassionate attitude towards all dogs
- Promoting responsible pet ownership
- Providing humane and sustainable dog population management and rabies elimination

solutions

- Supporting the government to ensure Indonesia fulfils its pledge to eliminate rabies by 2020;
- Equipping local law enforcers with the skills, resources and knowledge to ensure adequate enforcement of existing laws and regulations.

## Celebrity endorsement

The Dog Meat-Free Indonesia Coalition's campaign has been officially endorsed by the following national and international celebrities, including their participation in the campaign's main video: "I didn't know" (available to download at [www.dogmeatfreeindonesia.org](http://www.dogmeatfreeindonesia.org)):

- Ricky Gervais
- Peter Egan
- Joanna Lumley
- Sophia Latjuba
- Chelsea Islan
- Gamaliel Tapiheru

## Take action

Sign our petition for an end to Indonesia's cruel dog meat trade: [www.dogmeatfreeindonesia.org](http://www.dogmeatfreeindonesia.org)

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