



Dear President Joko Widodo,

We, the undersigned, write to you to express our grave concerns for the millions of dogs and cats caught up in Indonesia's brutal dog and cat meat trades each year, and the risk this trade poses to the health and safety of Indonesian citizens. We also fear the trade directly undermines your country's pledge to eliminate deadly rabies by 2020.

We were horrified by the findings of nationwide investigations by the Dog Meat-Free Indonesia coalition, documenting the horrific reality of the trade: more than one million dogs and cats are transported throughout Indonesia to supply markets, slaughterhouses and restaurants. These animals, many of them stolen pets, are subjected to crude and brutal methods of capture, transport and slaughter, and the immense suffering and fear they must endure is heartbreaking and absolutely shocking.

The footage from markets in North Sulawesi is deplorable, and clearly documents the routine use of brutal handling and killing, including repeatedly bludgeoning animals over the head, killing animals in front of their terrified cage-mates, and blowtorching dogs whilst they are still alive. We are sure you will agree that the level of brutality towards these dogs and cats is shocking and demands your urgent attention. Please review the footage [here](#) >>

The cruel treatment of these animals is conducted in full public view, including in front of children. There is a growing body of evidence to show that children exposed to brutality and cruelty to animals are at increased risk of developing psychological disturbance, with potential long-term impacts on both individuals and society. Please take a few moments to [watch this video](#) by world-renowned psychologist, Dr. M.L. Randour who viewed the DMFI footage.

Furthermore, despite only a minority of Indonesians ever consuming dog meat, the trade in dogs for consumption threatens the health of the entire nation. 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 regencies (and islands), disrupting herd immunity to rabies achieved through mass vaccination programs. For these reasons, the World Health Organization (WHO) has explicitly highlighted the trade in dogs for human consumption as a contributing factor to the spread of rabies in Indonesia.

The brutal and unhygienic slaughter and butchery of dogs, and consumption of meat from rabies-positive animals, puts humans at risk. Human deaths from rabies have been directly linked to involvement in the slaughtering, butchery, handling and even consumption of meat from infected dogs.

The blatant animal cruelty witnessed in Indonesia's dog and cat meat trade can never be excused as local custom or tradition. Regardless of its origin, the trade in dogs and cats for human consumption promotes the illegal sourcing and trading of animals, poses a serious risk to human health including to children's physical and psychological welfare, risks public safety and societal stability, directly abuses animal welfare, and as such undermines national and public interest in Indonesia.

Indonesia's international reputation will continue to be compromised for as long as such



obscene animal cruelty is allowed, the kind of cruelty that is both illegal and wholly unacceptable across most of the global community. As national and international concern for animals grows, so does the need for decisive action to be taken.

Whilst no country in the world today has legalised the dog meat trade, a growing number of countries across Asia have explicitly banned the trade in and consumption of dog meat. We would dearly love for Indonesia to join Hong Kong, Taiwan, Thailand, the Philippines, and others by introducing and enforcing legislation prohibiting the dog and cat meat trade. This would be celebrated globally and warmly welcomed by the millions of tourists who currently choose to visit Indonesia each year.

We thereby urge you to take immediate action to address these concerns by banning the dog and cat meat trades across Indonesia, thereby safeguarding your nation's health, and securing a reputation for Indonesia as a progressive nation on this most controversial of issues.

Yours sincerely

Bobby Fernando, General Manager, Animal Friends Jogja
Karin Franken, Director, Jakarta Animal Aid Network
Kitty Block, President, Humane Society International
Lola Webber, Campaign Director, Change For Animals Foundation
Dr Katherine Polak, Director, FOUR PAWS

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