



Animal Welfare.
Worldwide.

President Joko Widodo
President of the Republic of Indonesia
Istana Merdeka
Jakarta Pusat 10110
Indonesia

07 December, 2020

Re: Submission of 1,000,000 signatures to end the dog meat trade in Southeast Asia

Dear President Joko Widodo,

We are writing on behalf of FOUR PAWS International, the Dog Meat Free Indonesia Coalition, and over 1,000,000 people from around the world who have signed a petition calling for an urgent ban on the dog meat trade to safeguard human and animal health and welfare, and Indonesia's reputation as a world-class tourist destination. The petition can be viewed [here: https://bit.ly/36dcYUM](https://bit.ly/36dcYUM)

This matter is timelier than ever given the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic that has resulted in over 64 million human cases and 1.5 million fatalities, and the increasing awareness of – and concern for – the role animal trade play in such catastrophic emerging diseases.

Since 2017, the Dog Meat Free Indonesia Coalition, of which FOUR PAWS is a member, has been conducting nationwide investigations into the dog and cat meat trade. The evidence gathered has documented the immense animal cruelty inherent in the trade; the unsanitary and unhygienic trading, slaughter and butchery conditions and methods; the gross violation of Indonesian laws including those pertaining to zoonotic disease control (such as rabies); and the serious risks they pose to public health and safety.

The treatment of dogs caught up in the dog meat trade is as cruel as it is dangerous – from long-distance transport, sometimes spanning days, with no food, water or rest; to slaughter by bludgeoning, hanging and stabbing; and is in breach of national laws and prevailing animal welfare global standards. As national and international concern for animal welfare grows, by both the public and governments, so does condemnation of animal cruelty and recognition of the need to safeguard animals from cruel exploitation.

The dog meat trade in Indonesia involves the slaughter and consumption of over one million dogs each year and tens of thousands of cats, many of which are stolen pets; and most

VIER PFOTEN International
gemeinnützige Privatstiftung
Linke Wienzeile 236
1150 Vienna | Austria

phone: +43-1-545 50 20-0
fax: +43-1-545 50 20-99
e-mail: office@four-paws.org
www.four-paws.org

UniCredit Bank Austria AG
IBAN: AT13 1200 0515 8388 8444
BIC: BKAUATWW
HG Wien: FN 227934y



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caught up in the trade are illegally trafficked across provincial borders. Research suggests that less than 7% of Indonesians ever consume dog meat or benefit from the trade, yet the whole country is affected by the illegal trade and its negative impacts it has on public health and reputation. Despite laws already in place being routinely flouted by traders, and despite the global pandemic that calls upon governments around the world to take action to tackle dangerous animal trade, it continues unabated.

Indonesia's wet markets are home to some of the most atrocious and shocking examples of animal cruelty anywhere in the world. At the brutal live animal markets in North Sulawesi, for example, thousands of dogs and cats are bludgeoned in public or blow-torched whilst still alive every month, in full view of the public, including tourists. These practices are in direct contravention to the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism's campaign promoting a, "Wonderful Indonesia" and are in stark contrast to Indonesia's world-renowned natural beauty and diversity.

Please take a few moments to view footage from North Sulawesi's live animal markets [here](https://bit.ly/3aJZGiy):
<https://bit.ly/3aJZGiy>

Aside from the ongoing damage to Indonesia's international reputation, the trade also contributes to, and facilitates, canine-mediated rabies, a fatal disease which continues to be endemic throughout Indonesia, with only 8 out of 34 provinces considered 'rabies-free', and an estimated 197 Indonesians dying every year¹. Despite being 100% preventable through dog vaccination, the Global Alliance for Rabies Control estimates that dog vaccination coverage is less than 25% - far less than is required to eradicate the disease². Contributing to low vaccination rates is the frequent removal and killing of dogs and cats for consumption, which disrupts any attempts at developing the required herd immunity of 75%. The dog and cat meat trade also involve the mass sourcing of animals of unknown health status, cross-country trafficking, and import of rabies-infected animals into provinces and cities. To that effect, it is not surprising that North Sulawesi Province is home to the highest numbers of human deaths from rabies in Indonesia³, given the rampant trafficking and slaughtering of dogs.

We do, however, recognize and applaud action that has already been taken by the Indonesian government on this issue. In August of 2018, the international community celebrated the Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture's announcement regarding support for a ban on the trade in dog meat⁴ and strong messaging that in Indonesia "dogs are not considered food". This was followed by an announcement by Central Java Governor Ganjar Pranowo in December

¹ Global Alliance for Rabies Control, 2020, Indonesia

² Ibid

³ CIVAS, 2015, Rabies Threatens People in North Sulawesi

⁴ Jakarta Post, 2018; Indonesia to ban dog meat consumption

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2019 to end the slaughter of more than 13,000 dogs in Central Java, based on a 2012 food law, which states that dogs are not qualified to be consumable food since they are neither farm nor forest products⁵. Actions taken in Bali to tackle this trade have also been applauded globally after exposés revealed the scale and brutality of the province's dog meat trade.

However, there has been little further action taken by the Indonesian Central Government to address the trade which continues almost unabated. Since the COVID-19 outbreak emerged from Wuhan, China, in late November 2019⁶, other governments in the region have acted to ban the dog meat trade, as an urgent matter of public health and is an essential part of protecting us from future pandemics. For instance, the Chinese cities of Shenzhen and Zhuhai introduced city-wide bans on dog and cat meat consumption, and the Chinese national government has publicly stated that dogs are considered "companion animals" not livestock, and should be removed from the list of animals considered "food"^{7,8}. In July 2020, the Siem Reap Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries in Cambodia issued a letter outlawing the dog meat trade, reflective of current widespread opinion that dogs are companions, not food⁹.

On behalf of the undersigned organizations from around the world and the 1,000,000 people who care deeply about dogs, we respectfully ask that the Indonesian government take **urgent** preventative measures by:

1. Immediately and permanently banning the trade, slaughter, and consumption of dogs and cats in Indonesia
2. Enforcing existing legislation to close down illegal dog and cat slaughtering establishments and live animal markets
3. Issuing a public statement regarding the public health dangers of the slaughter and consumption of dogs and cats.

We look forward to hearing your response regarding this urgent matter and would like to meet with you to discuss how we can support you moving forward.

⁵ South China Morning Post, 2019, Indonesian province bans eating dog meat: report

⁶ Business Insider, 2020, China just banned the trade and consumption of wild animals. Experts think the coronavirus jumped from live animals to people at a market,

⁷ BBC News, 2020, Shenzhen becomes first Chinese city to ban eating cats and dogs,

⁸ International Business Times, 2020, China's Zhuhai Permanently Bans Consumption Of Cat And Dog Meat, Second City To Do So

⁹ BBC News, 2020, Dog meat: First Cambodian province bans sale and consumption

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Sincerely,

Josef Pfabigan

CEO and Chair of the Board of FOUR PAWS

Sent also on behalf of the following:

1. Dog Meat Free Indonesia Coalition
2. Change for Animals Foundation
3. Jakarta Animal Aid Network
4. Bali Animal Welfare Association
5. Yayasan Pro Natura
6. Animal Friends Manado Indonesia
7. Animal Friends Jogja

Copied to:

Dr. H. Syahrul Yasin Limpo, S.H, M.H

Minister of Agriculture
Jalan Harsono R.M. No. 3
Jakarta Selatan
Jakarta 12550
Republic of Indonesia

Letjen TNI (Purn) Dr. dr. Terawan Agus Putranto, Sp. Rad.

Minister of Health
Jalan H.R. Rasuna Said Blok
X.5 Kav. 4-9
Jakarta Selatan
Jakarta 12950
Republic of Indonesia

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2. Global Alliance for Rabies Control, 2020, Rabies Burden Estimates, <https://rabiesalliance.org/country/indonesia>
3. CIVAS, 2015, Rabies Threatens People in North Sulawesi <http://civas.net/2015/01/26/rabies-threatens-people-in-north-sulawesi-2/?lang=en>
4. Jakarta Post, 2018, Indonesia to ban dog meat consumption <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2018/08/07/indonesia-to-ban-dog-meat-consumption.html>
5. South China Morning Post, 2019, Indonesian province bans eating dog meat: report <https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/3040623/indonesia-province-bans-dog-meat-consumption-report>
6. Business Insider, 2020, China just banned the trade and consumption of wild animals. Experts think the coronavirus jumped from live animals to people at a market, <https://www.businessinsider.com/china-bans-wildlife-trade-consumption-coronavirus-2020-2>
7. BBC News, 2020, Shenzhen becomes first Chinese city to ban eating cats and dogs, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-52131940>
8. International Business Times, 2020, China's Zhuhai Permanently Bans Consumption Of Cat And Dog Meat, Second City To Do So, <https://www.ibtimes.com/chinas-zhuhai-permanently-bans-consumption-cat-dog-meat-second-city-do-so-2960225>
9. BBC News, 2020, Dog meat: First Cambodian province bans sale and consumption, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-53334854>

