



Animal Welfare.
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**His Excellency Nguyen Xuan Phuc
Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
1 Hoang Hoa Tham Street,
Ba Dinh District,
Ha Noi, Viet Nam**

07 December, 2020

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

Your Excellency,

We, the undersigned Vietnamese and international animal welfare non-profit organizations are honoured to submit the signatures of more than 1,000,000 people from around the world, including more than 180,000 Vietnamese, to respectfully request a ban on the country's dog and cat meat trade. The petition can be viewed at: <https://help.four-paws.org/en/end-dog-and-cat-meat-trade-southeast-asia>.

We believe this matter to be urgent given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and the role such trade play in emerging diseases. Tackling this trade is required to safeguard both public health and animal welfare, given that they represent a gross abuse of globally established standards of animal welfare and pose a threat to rabies eradication measures.

In February and August of 2020, FOUR PAWS released investigative reports detailing the dog and cat meat trade in Viet Nam¹². Both documented the immense animal cruelty inherent in the trade, unsanitary slaughter methods, gross violations of Vietnamese law, and a serious risk to public health. The publication of these findings resulted in national and international condemnation and a call for urgent action to be taken.

The trade in dogs and cats for human consumption in Viet Nam is the highest out of all ASEAN member states, involving an estimated five million dogs and one million cats, every year. Research indicates that less than only a fraction of the population even consume dog or cat meat (~11% in Hanoi, <2% in Ho Chi Minh City), yet the trade

¹ FOUR PAWS. 2020. The Dog and Cat Meat Trade in Southeast Asia – A Threat to Animals and People

² FOUR PAWS & Change for Animals Foundation. 2020. Victims of a Hidden Trade: Vietnam's Cat Meat Trade



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continues to drive the rampant and illegal pet theft, causing growing societal unrest and increasing international concern.

The dog and cat meat trade have been documented to facilitate the transmission of deadly notifiable diseases such as rabies and is reliant on illegal operations and a lack of enforcement of existing laws and regulations in place to protect public health, animal welfare, and prevent disease transmission. In recent years, the Government has taken steps to address rabies, a disease that kills an average of 91.4 people per year and poses a significant economic burden (From 2005 to 2014 dog rabies cost Viet Nam over 14.8 trillion VND)³.

In 2017, the "National Program for Rabies Control and Elimination, 2017-2021", was issued by the Prime Minister (according to Decision No. 193/QĐ-TTg)⁴ with the aim of eliminating rabies throughout the country. However, achieving rabies elimination without addressing the dog meat trade is simply impossible. The trade disrupts any attempts at developing herd immunity through mass canine vaccination programs by removing and killing vaccinated animals. The dog and cat meat trade also involve the mass sourcing of animals of unknown health status, cross-country transport, and import of rabies-infected animals into cities such as Hanoi. The importation of potentially rabies-infected dogs from Cambodia into Vietnam for slaughter occurs regularly as well, further undermining national rabies control efforts.

Legislation already exists within Viet Nam that if enforced, could significantly curtail or eliminate the trade. The transportation and slaughter practices seen in the dog and cat meat trade are in clear violation of the Law on Animal Health (No. 79/2015/QH13)⁵, most notably Articles 8 and 13 which clearly forbid the transport of diseased animals and those potentially carrying infectious pathogens and evading quarantine, as well as Articles 69, 70, 71 pertaining to veterinary sanitation requirements.

In September 2018, there was international celebration when the Hanoi People's Committee pledged to end the dog meat trade by 2021, stating that the brutal and unhygienic trade could tarnish the city's image as a "civilised and modern capital". Other governments across Asia agree with this sentiment, with bans on dog and cat meat in place already in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, the Philippines and Singapore.

³ Shwiff, S.A., Elser, J. & Hoang, T.X., 2016., "Estimating the economic impact of rabies in Viet Nam, 2005-2014"

⁴ Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and Ministry of Health., National Program for Rabies Control and Elimination in Viet Nam in the period from 2017-2021.

⁵ Viet Nam Law on Animal Health (No. 79/2015/QH13)



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However, we have seen no action taken by the People's Committee on this issue. Similarly, in September of 2019, the Food Safety Management Authority of Ho Chi Minh City recommended that people stop eating dog meat for health and moral reasons; reflective again of growing sentiment against the trade.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic emerged from Wuhan, China in late November 2019⁶, other governments in the region have acted to ban the dog and cat meat trade, recognising that it is not compatible with modern practices and safeguarding human health 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 Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs excluded dogs from the livestock list stating dogs are “companion animals”, not “food”^{7,8}**. In neighboring Cambodia, Siem Reap became the first province in the Kingdom to officially declare a ban on the dog meat trade⁹.

On behalf of the undersigned organisations around the globe and the more than one million signatories, we respectfully ask that the Vietnam government to take **urgent** preventative measures by:

- Immediately and permanently banning the trade, slaughter, and consumption of dogs and cats in Vietnam.
- Enforcing existing legislation to close down illegal dog and cat slaughtering establishments and confiscate animals being trafficked interprovincially.
- 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 on this issue.

Sincerely,

Josef Pfabigan,
CEO and Chair of the Board of FOUR PAWS

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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Sent also on behalf of the following organisations:

1. PAWS for Compassion
2. Vietnam Cat Welfare
3. Change for Animals Foundation
4. Center of Pet Animal Protections and Studies

Copied to:

Deputy Prime Minister Vu Duc Dam

Ministry of Science and Technology
01 Hoang Hoa Tham St
Ba Dinh District
Hanoi, Vietnam

Minister Nguyen Xuan Cuong

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
02 Ngoc Ha St, Ngoc Ha Wrd
Ba Dinh District
Hanoi, Vietnam

Minister Nguyen Thanh Long

Ministry of Health
138A Giang Vo St
Ba Dinh District
Hanoi, Vietnam

Minister Nguyen Ngoc Thien

Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism
51 Ngo Quyen St, Hang Bai Wrd
Hoan Kiem District
Hanoi, Vietnam

Director General Pham Van Dong

Department of Animal Health
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
15/78, Giai Phong St, Phuong Mai Wrd
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1. FOUR PAWS. 2020. The Dog and Cat Meat Trade in Southeast Asia – A Threat to Animals and People; [A threat to animals and people - Dog & Cat Meat Trade #ProtectMillions - a Campaign of FOUR PAWS \(four-paws.org\)](#)
2. FOUR PAWS & Change for Animals Foundation. 2020. Victims of a Hidden Trade: Vietnam's Cat Meat Trade, [A Report on the Cat Meat Trade in Vietnam - Dog & Cat Meet Trade #ProtectMillions - a Campaign of FOUR PAWS \(four-paws.org\)](#)
3. Shwiff, S.A., Elser, J. & Hoang, T.X., 2016., “*Estimating the economic impact of rabies in Viet Nam, 2005-2014*”
4. Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and Ministry of Health., National Program for Rabies Control and Elimination in Viet Nam in the period from 2017-2021.
5. Viet Nam Law on Animal Health (No. 79/2015/QH13)
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>

