



Stray cats and dogs awaiting adoption at PAWS Animal Welfare Shelter in Jalan Lapangan Terbang Subang, Selangor. The writer says the Animal Welfare Board should be set up soon to prevent cruelty to animals.

# Stop cold-blooded killing of stray dogs

ALL Malaysians, including pet owners, local council workers and the general public should stop mistreating animals. This includes killing stray dogs in an inhumane way.

In a civilised society like ours, all forms of cruelty against animals must not be tolerated.

Recently, the public was outraged to see pictures of a dead dog circulated on social media, allegedly shot and killed by Rompin district council workers. The dog, named Rocky, was shot in front of its owner's house after midnight. According to residents, the local council had been carrying out night shooting of stray dogs in the housing estate for quite some time.

A news report quoted the Rompin district council enforcement chief as saying the council initiated the shooting exercise due to many complaints about stray dogs there. The council had to resort to shooting as it was difficult to chase and catch the strays in a big area.

There might be complaints against strays but that does not justify such acts of cruelty. Moreover, it can pose a danger to the public. There are more humane ways to deal with strays and the local authorities

should discuss the matter and consult with the Veterinary Services Department.

One of the primary causes of strays is irresponsible pet ownership, which must be addressed by the Animal Welfare Act.

The cold-blooded killing of strays, what more a pet dog, is appalling and atrocious. This is not the Malaysian way of treating animals and we have to put a stop to ill-treatment of animals.

Under Section 30 of the Animal Welfare Act 2015, no one is allowed to kill any dog, cat or any other animal by way of shooting with firearms, unless authorised by the veterinary authority during an emergency or for the purpose of disease control.

The public demands to know if the council was authorised by the Veterinary Services Department to do the shooting and whether it was for disease control.

The landmark Animal Welfare Bill 2015, which deals with cruelty against animals and promotes responsible ownership of animals, was passed by Parliament last year. The law was gazetted last December but it has yet to be implemented.

The Act allows for the setting up of an Animal Welfare Board to raise public awareness on animal welfare and prevent

inhumane treatment of animals and pets. I strongly urge the government to form the Animal Welfare Board as soon as possible.

Stricter animal cruelty laws such as our Animal Welfare Act is necessary to discourage animal abuse. The law empowers effective enforcement and includes harsh penalties.

Under the Act, a minimum fine of RM20,000 to a maximum of RM100,000 and three years' jail will be imposed on those convicted of abusing animals. Cruelty offences stated under the law include the act of beating, mutilating, poisoning, confining in an area that restrict natural movements of the animals, abandoning, or the owner allowing such cruelty against the animal.

It is essential to implement the Act as soon as possible as every day wasted can be a death sentence for the animals. As you read this, another innocent animal is being abused or neglected.

I call on all animal lovers, animal activists and relevant NGOs to come together to speak up for the promotion of the Animal Welfare Act 2015. We should declare our strongest protest against all animal abuse, neglect and the way animals are killed in

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barbaric ways.

We also have to pool our expertise and together with the government, find a way to solve the problem of the stray population. So far, despite being captured and disposed, the stray population keeps increasing.

I am also supportive of the proposal for a subject on animal welfare be taught in schools to create more understanding and respect towards animals.

The key to preventing animal abuse and neglect is education. Many incidents of animal abuse and neglect occur due to ignorance. Providing education on proper treatment of animals, understanding animal behaviour, compassion and the consequences of irresponsible action towards animals are a step in the right direction to stop animal abuse and neglect.

Members of the public, who witness animals or pets being abused, should lodge a police report or upload the video or picture on social media, so that action can be taken by the authorities.

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