

# China's Dog Slaughter Draws Worldwide Outrage

In late July, a government-ordered slaughter killed 50,000 owned and stray dogs in Yunnan Province in southwestern China. Reports of the supposed rabies control measure—and word of plans for a second massacre in Shandong Province—outraged people all over the world. Images of officials brutally clubbing dogs to death in the street inspired countless e-mails and phone calls to The HSUS's global division, Humane Society International (HSI). On August 10, an HSUS/HSI organized protest brought more than 100 people and many of their companion canines in front of the Chinese Embassy to encourage the Chinese government to adopt a more humane and effective approach to controlling rabies.

China would do well to follow the example of other countries that are trying to improve animal welfare. HSI has been working proactively in India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Indonesia to provide expertise and guidance in creating humane animal control programs that include sterilization and effective rabies vaccination.

Two years ago, the Marwar Trust, an Indian organization supported by HSI, started a model vaccination and sterilization program that can be tailored to work in almost any location. The animal control unit consists of trained veterinarians, veterinary assistants, catchers, and managers. The catchers are trained in humane capture and handling using readily available potato sacks that have been converted into catching mechanisms. This homemade sack system helps catchers quickly and painlessly capture dogs who are then driven to the vaccination/sterilization clinic. Following sterilization and vaccination for rabies, the dogs are monitored in kennels during a five-day recovery period and then released in their original location. Documentation of a dog's description, location, and procedure must be thorough; normally, the tip of an ear is removed during the sterilization process to easily identify the dog on the streets as sterilized and vaccinated.

A similar program could be established in China, and HSUS president and CEO Wayne Pacelle offered the Chinese government \$100,000 worth of assistance to help develop one. In a formal letter to Zhou Wenzhong, China's ambassador to the United States, Pacelle wrote that the offer was contingent upon an immediate cessation of the mass killings.



"If they were to expand any further on the mass extermination approach, we'd be seeing hundreds of thousands or millions of dogs killed," Pacelle says. "We're offering them a way out ... a solution. It's better for people, for human health and animal welfare."

Effective rabies control would promote not only the safety of Chinese citizens but the welfare of their dogs—and would be in line with the practices suggested by the World Health Organization, which has stated that indiscriminate mass killing does not work and instead emphasizes the need for better vaccination programs. The HSUS can help with the solution, and we hope the Chinese government will accept our offer and put China on a new path to humane animal control.

For more information, visit [www.hsi.org](http://www.hsi.org).

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