Great Bear Rescue – Bear Family Saved from Backyard Captivity in Armenia

Tuesday 13 May, 2025

Three Syrian brown bears named Aram, Nairi, and their daughter, Lola, were rescued after years of unimaginable suffering in a backyard in Yerevan, Armenia.

Confined to filthy cages and denied even the most basic care, the bears were discovered during an investigation by the Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC) following a public tip-off.

Their rescue saw FPWC and International Animal Rescue coming together to secure their freedom. Described by International Animal Rescue (IAR) as their “most difficult rescue to date”, it took over 12 hours. The rescue involved a court-ordered confiscation, police intervention, and transport under heavy rain and darkness.

The male bear, Aram, was held captive for 12 years and repeatedly bred with Nairi, a female taken from the wild. Lola, their young daughter, was still imprisoned with them, while previous cubs had been taken and sold.

This difficult rescue started when the team arrived at the property at 9 am, but the bear’s owner refused entry despite a legal order. After a prolonged standoff, they finally gained access as night fell and worked into the night to sedate and remove the bears from their appalling conditions.

Alan Knight OBE, President of International Animal Rescue, who was at the rescue, said: *“These were some of the worst conditions I have ever seen. The stench, the filth, the sheer cruelty of locking these animals up in tiny cages and feeding them cola, it was absolutely horrific.”*

Now safe at FPWC’s wildlife rescue centre in Urtsadzor, which is supported by IAR, the bears are receiving urgent veterinary care. Aram suffers from broken and infected teeth, likely caused by years of poor diet and neglect. All three are in quarantine and under close observation.

International Animal Rescue is launching an urgent appeal to fund the ongoing care of these three bears and to help complete a new sanctuary where Aram, Nairi, Lola, and their previously rescued son Noah can live together safely. The cost of caring for one bear is over £7,500 per year. With three, the annual care alone exceeds £22,500, excluding the significant costs of the veterinary care and the cost of the rescue mission itself.

Thanks to two generous donors, all donations to the appeal will be matched, doubling every pound raised.

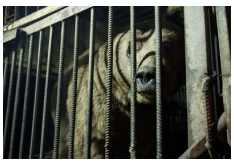
To donate and support the urgent care and future home for these bears, visit:

https://www.internationalanimalrescue.org/appeal/bearfamily

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