

Morocco's proposed animal welfare law must end World Cup mass dog killings, say global campaigners

Thursday 17 July, 2025

Animal welfare campaigners have warned that a new draft law being considered by the Moroccan government must bring an immediate end to the country's brutal street dog culling programme, or risk being dismissed as a hollow gesture.

The Moroccan government's General Secretariat has announced that it will review a proposed law on the "protection of animals and the prevention of their dangers" on Thursday, July 10.

But campaigners from the International Animal Welfare Protection Coalition (IAWPC) say the law must include concrete measures to stop the daily killings of dogs, or it will be meaningless.

The IAWPC, a coalition of 26 animal welfare organisations worldwide including the RSPCA, PETA and Dogs Trust, has proved that Morocco is currently engaged in a systematic and brutal mass culling of dogs, both stray and owned, in preparation for its role as co-host of the 2030 FIFA World Cup. The group estimates that as many as three million dogs could be killed before the tournament begins.

Moroccan 'death squads' are patrolling towns and cities around World Cup stadium sites, shooting, poisoning, and capturing dogs in what the IAWPC describes as a campaign of "relentless and merciless" violence. Many killings are said to take place in front of children and tourists.

Les Ward MBE, Chairman of the IAWPC, said the Moroccan government has repeatedly misled the public about the extent of the killings.

"Since the IAWPC campaign began, it has become clear to everyone that we are dealing with a slippery and untrustworthy government," he said. "They make claims that have no basis in reality, including that the killing has ended, when every Moroccan knows it is happening every single day."

The IAWPC has offered to use its extensive knowledge-base to support Morocco in implementing a humane dog management strategy, including large-scale Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Release (TNVR) programmes, a method that has proved the most effective in countries across the world in tackling rabies. But their offers, Ward said, have been ignored.

The group also pointed to warnings from the World Health Organisation (WHO), which has stated that mass dog culling is not an effective method for controlling rabies – a disease that remains present in Morocco.

"Mass dog vaccination has repeatedly been shown to be effective for controlling dog-mediated rabies," WHO has said. "Removal of dogs does not decrease dog density or control rabies in the long run. Mass culling of dogs should therefore not be a part of a rabies control strategy."

The IAWPC is calling on FIFA to urgently intervene and demand that Morocco end the mass killing of dogs and adopt proven, humane alternatives.

The IAWPC has evidence that 'tagged dogs', those that have been rabies vaccinated and sterilised, are having their 'tags' removed after being killed to hide their special status.

This directly results in the reduction of herd immunity and puts local communities and tourists at increased risk of rabies transmission.

Ward added: "It would be laughable, if it wasn't so serious, but it seems the Moroccan Government will seek to use the dogs as the scapegoats for its failures in any new legislation, when it's clear to everyone else, that it is they and their ineffective dog massacre programme, as well as their ineffective and counterproductive rabies programme which are to blame".

Mohammed Roudani, Head of the Public Health and Green Spaces Division at Morocco's Ministry of the Interior, told CNN recently that: "We must deal with the issue in a different way. No more slaughter. No more strychnine. We need an ethical solution".

Ward concluded: "The Moroccan Government should leave the dark ages when dealing with societal

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challenges. Instead of continuing down the path of violence and death, it should seize the opportunity and follow humane solutions.

"If the Government chooses otherwise through its new draft law and continues its dog killing programme, they will rightly face condemnation, its tourist industry will inevitably be damaged and the IAWPC will increase its campaign of opposition.

"The solution is simple, the Moroccan Government's proposed new draft animal protection law must stop the cruelty and dog killing in whatever form."

ENDS

Note to editors:

More on the campaign: www.iawpc.org

On instagram: @iawpc

Link to CNN article with the Roudiani interview:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2025/06/20/sport/morocco-stray-dogs-2030-world-cup-spt>

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