



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Southeast Asian Governments Take Steps to End Dog Meat Trade  
*Asia Canine Protection Alliance urges governments to enact moratorium***

**HANOI, Vietnam (29 Aug. 2013)**--Concerned about the spread of rabies, officials from Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam have agreed to consider a five-year moratorium on the commercial transport of dogs from one country to another to end the inhumane trade in dogs for meat. If a moratorium is enacted, the impact on rabies transmission in the region will be measured. In Thailand, where the trade is illegal, an agreement to better enforce regulations was made.

Attendees met with animal welfare coalition Asia Canine Protection Alliance at a meeting in Hanoi where they agreed to discuss approval of the moratorium recommendations among their respective governments. ACPA is made up of Change For Animals Foundation, Humane Society International, Animals Asia and Soi Dog Foundation acting both locally within Asia and internationally. ACPA will provide financial assistance, expertise and other resources as needed.

The commercial trade in dogs for meat is responsible for slaughtering an estimated 5 million dogs for human consumption per year. Thailand, Cambodia and Laos supply dogs for the trade into Vietnam, where they are slaughtered and consumed. Dog meat production has evolved from small-scale household businesses to a multi-million dollar industry of illicit traders that causes animal suffering and poses a health risk to humans.

The trade in dogs for meat is thwarting rabies elimination efforts. Countries aren't complying with their own national animal disease prevention measures, nor are they following global recommendations for rabies control and elimination. In the trade, dogs of unknown origin and background are stolen from the streets, many of whom are pets, and transported without food or water, over long distances, from one country to another. Many dogs carry diseases, and transport conditions increase the possibility of disease exchange, including rabies.

**Quotes from Participants:**

**Pornpitak Panlar, with the Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health in Thailand:** *"We cannot change culture or habit, but we should stop the smuggling of dogs. This meeting was important to urge government agencies to see the problems caused by the dog meat trade and discuss a platform to stop the spread of rabies."*

**Nguyen Thu Thuy, deputy director, Department of Animal Health in Vietnam:** *"The [rabies] situation has become more severe – especially this year. One of the main reasons is the illegal cross-border trade of dogs."*

**Boonseub Chemchoig, chief inspector general, Ministry of Interior, Thailand:** *"We never allow the transfer of dogs from Thailand to Vietnam for the purpose of consumption. We are still seeking solutions as the border between Thailand and other countries is long and difficult to manage considering the illegal trade. We are trying."*

**Lola Webber, programmes leader, Change For Animals Foundation:** *"Rabies remains endemic in Vietnam, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia. Ending the illegal trade in dogs destined for human consumption is a crucial component of national and regional rabies control elimination programmes."*

**Kelly O'Meara, director of companion animals and engagement, Humane Society International:** *"Rabies and other communicable diseases, such as cholera and trichinellosis, represent a major public health threat throughout Asia. An end to the trade will help human health and help save the lives of countless dogs who suffer in the trade. Evidence makes clear the inherent cruelty in all stages of the trade---from sourcing and transport, to sale and eventual slaughter."*

**Tuan Bendixsen, Vietnam director, Animals Asia:** *"While the dog meat trade is not illegal in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, the international trade in dogs is illegal if health and vaccination documents cannot be provided for each dog. As the trade involves hundreds of dogs in each transport, it is impossible to have proper documents for all of dogs, or properly check each dog before a border crossing. This trade must be stopped."*

**John Dalley, vice president, Soi Dog Foundation:** *"This is not a debate about culture or custom. This is an issue of human health. The trade we are seeing in the region is profit-driven and is not motivated by any desire to maintain a culture. It is also worth noting that no country in the world has explicitly legalised the production of, trade in and consumption of dog meat."*

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**Humane Society International** and its partner organisations together constitute one of the world's largest animal protection organisations. For nearly 20 years, HSI has been working for the protection of all animals through the use of science, advocacy, education and hands-on programmes. Celebrating animals and confronting cruelty worldwide — on the Web at [hsi.org](http://hsi.org).

**Animals Asia** is devoted to ending the barbaric practice of bear bile farming, improving the welfare of animals in China and Vietnam, promoting compassion and respect for all animals, and working to bring about long-term change through three major programmes: End Bear Bile Farming, Cat and Dog Welfare and Zoos and Safari Parks.

**Soi Dog Foundation** is working to improve the welfare of dogs and cats in Thailand, resulting in better lives for both the animal and human communities, to end animal cruelty, and to ultimately create a society without homeless animals. ([www.soidog.org](http://www.soidog.org))

**Change For Animals Foundation (CFAF)** is an organisation committed to promoting compassion towards all animals and ending animal suffering. CFAF works to support and inspire positive change for animals around the world in partnership with local animal protection groups and an international network of animal welfare specialists. ([www.changeforanimals.org](http://www.changeforanimals.org))

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