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243 AMERICAN PIT BULL TERRIERS FORCED TO FIGHT ONLINE

**FILIPINO TIME & DATE: 9pm FRIDAY 2nd DECEMBER 2011
THE PLACE: INDANG, CAVITE, 20 MILES SOUTH OF MANILA**

ANIMAL KINGDOM FOUNDATION (AKF) INVESTIGATORS, TOGETHER WITH PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE (PNP) RAIDED A FACILITY THAT WAS BEING USED FOR INTERNATIONAL ONLINE BETTING ON DOGFIGHTING. SMASHING THIS SYNDICATE IS SAID TO BE A WORLD RECORD AGAINST THIS DANGEROUS AND CRUEL EVIL SPORT.

At this dreadful place dog fighting went on for many hours every day, it being beamed around the globe for online international betting. There were no live spectators at the ring side, watching as these highly trained American Pit Bulls savagely fought to tear each other apart, photos of which are far too horrendous to be included with this newsletter.

However, I feel that I am duty-bound to tell you of this disgusting abuse of animals, as I desperately need your help to stamp out this cruel sport, where the suffering of these dogs is difficult, if not impossible, to imagine. Enclosed you will find a postcard already addressed to the Filipino Ambassador here in London. All you have to do is sign it, stick a 36 pence stamp on it and pop it in a letter box.

There is a polite message printed on the card, asking the Ambassador to contact his government in Manila, to instruct the Philippine National Police (PNP) to give priority in seeking out these criminals, arresting them, and bringing them before the courts. As you may well remember, the previous Ambassador, Antonio M. Lagdameo, was very helpful and sympathetic in writing to the government in Manila, requesting that the PNP help us in eradicating the dog meat trade, and I'm pleased to say we now do get the co-operation of the PNP. My hope is that we will now get similar help from the new Ambassador against dog fighting.

The PNP & AKF investigators could never have been able to prepare themselves for what they were about to be confronted with: row after row of one metre square rusty cages, each with one American Pit Bull terrier in them, as you will see in the photos. The cages have a solid steel wall between them, so one dog could not see another, the case being that if the dogs could see each other they would want to fight. So here we have the case of every dog being kept in solitary confinement. In total there were 243 Pit Bulls.

The ones not being kept in these cages were kept in old fifty-gallon oil drums, which have a small hole cut in them; the dogs being secured by a very heavy leather collar with a thick heavy steel chain attached to the collar. The other end of the chain was attached to a big steel stake driven into the ground, so there could be no escape. Worse still, these oil drums were in an area completely without any shade; one can imagine the heat inside one of these drums - seldom is the temperature ever below 32 degrees.

The only escape from their confinement was when they were taken to the arena to fight, after which they would be returned wounded to their isolation. Our investigators having been in this place for nine days could not find any evidence which would suggest that veterinary care was available, it being left to the helpers to patch the animals up. If they got better, they would be made to fight again, if not they were left to die.

As this was an international operation these dogs were made to fight at all times of the day or night - we understand that something like seven to ten fights a day would take place. Even as I have said that when the place was raided the number of dogs was 243; because of the injuries and death rate there was always a shortage of dogs to fulfil the need for the high number of dog fights every day.

At the time of the raid, dog-fighting was in progress and from what I have seen of the police video, it must have been hell for the police and our investigators. Panic breaking out in those responsible for this carnage, our people wanting to stop the dog fight, the police trying to arrest the criminals. From the video I can see and hear the police shouting "Everyone get down on the floor, get down, get down". In all seven Koreans who were the ones in charge of running the place, and twelve local Filipinos who were employed to do the dirty work were all arrested.

All have been charged with aiding and abetting illegal dog-fighting and illegal gambling. Our AKF lawyers, together with the police and the Department of Public Prosecutions will lead for the prosecution. As time progresses towards the main court hearing, the prosecution team will if at all possible bring further criminal violations against those already charged. I have already said "I want the book thrown at these individuals". The dog meat trade is bad enough, but this is just a living hell. There cannot be any mercy shown to these criminals and there will not be any mercy for them.

Needless to say this whole business comes as a complete shock to us all. We are set up to deal with the dog meat trade, and have all the required facilities to deal with it. Once the full scope of this was beginning to sink in to us I knew even though I was now in England, that I had to work out how to handle this and to take command and do what would be best for the dogs, knowing full well that we could not take this very dangerous breed of dog into our rescue centre. Regrettably, we had and would still not have, any option but to call upon the Philippine Government department, the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) which includes Animal Welfare. As this was Friday night there was a delay until the Monday. My instructions to my AKF staff were to stay on the site 24/7, to feed and look after the dogs until officials from the BAI arrived.

Upon the arrival of these government officials it was explained to them that they would have to take responsibility for these dogs, as our rescue centre was not a suitable place to house these animals.

It was agreed that we (AKF) would give every possible assistance to the government provincial vets, who had now been sent by the BAI. We would continue to supply food for the dogs and to care for them, whilst our vets (who were also on site) would be willing to treat the sick, those suffering from malnutrition and wounds caused by fighting and other sickness. Difficulties did arise due to the ferocity of these dogs, nevertheless they did their best. A small number had to be put down due to their very poor condition; these were all taken back to our centre where they were buried in our dog cemetery with dignity.

The conclusion of these events is not easy for me to describe, as there is a certain amount of political sensitivity surrounding it. I have to say, first this was the first time for everybody having to deal with this kind of situation, the scale and size of it for those there must have been overwhelming. The situation now was being controlled by the government provincial vets; AKF staff remained on site doing their best for the animals 24/7 for 9 days.

What happened next may well not have been for the best: a number of local people were allowed to adopt some of these dogs, after which a local organisation has taken in the last remaining 73 dogs, with the intentions of rehabilitating them. . . .

I'm sure all of my loyal supporters reading this newsletter will be absolutely appalled and sickened by this evil disgusting episode, and will want AKF to make whatever effort is possible to stamp it out. That is not to say we will divert our attention from the dog meat trade, rest assured that we will never do that. However, we do have a legal signed agreement with the Philippine National Police (PNP) to attend with the PNP to all matters concerning abuse of dogs.

Early in the New Year I will be back in the Philippines, and we shall be meeting the top brass of the BAI and the PNP to thrash out the best method of dealing with these kinds of criminals who persist in making a living out of torturing animals, and also the way of dealing with the aftermath of their crimes.

ON THE ENCLOSED DONOR FORM YOU WILL SEE THAT I AM ASKING FOR YOU TO VOTE ON THE ISSUE OF PIT BULL DOG-FIGHTING IN THE PHILIPPINES. THIS WILL NOT INTERFERE WITH OUR WORK ON THE DOG MEAT TRADE, WHICH WILL CONTINUE AS NORMAL. HOWEVER, IT IS LIKELY TO INCREASE OUR EVERYDAY EXPENSES. YOUR VOTE IS IMPORTANT TO US, AS IT IS YOUR MONEY WE ARE SPENDING. EVEN IF YOU ARE NOT DONATING AT THIS TIME, PLEASE VOTE BY TICKING ONE OF THE BOXES - YES OR NO.

Short update on our efforts to eradicate dog eating:

All 163 dogs that we confiscated from the dog traders during my last time out there are nicely settled down in our rescue centre. Spaying and neutering, vaccinating and any other veterinary treatment required is now in full swing. In fact since I have been home, one dog has already been re-homed: a visitor to the centre liked the look of him, and it was a love match at first sight.

Our three school teachers are still hard at it, teaching 7 - 11 year olds responsible pet ownership, and the kids in turn are teaching their parents not to eat dogs. It really is quite amazing the feedback that we get from the children. Come the New Year we will be taking on a further three teachers to teach the same age group in the areas south of Manila, where most of the dogs come from which supply the dog meat trade.

Plus our lawyers are still working towards getting the amendment and ordinance to the new Anti Rabies law, the 9284 Act. This new law will dramatically increase the penalties for trading in dogs for their meat. Let's hope that the New Year 2012 will see a significant move forward in our favour.

As I have said many times before, we can only be as strong in bringing relief and justice for the victims of this cruel trade, as your support allows us to do. Fortunately for the dogs, I know you will continue to be strong in your support to us. As long as we keep fighting, I am sure our day for rejoicing will come, and the dogs will be able to live in peace.

Wishing you all the very best for 2012.

On behalf of the animals.

Yours truly



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