

International Organization for Animal Protection



OIPA - Organizzazione Internazionale per la Protezione degli Animali - Onlus

NGO associated with the UN Department of Global Communications (DGC)

UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

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Constitutional Court of Türkiye
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27th January 2025

Subject: Urgent Appeal for the Annulment of Law No. 5199 on the Protection of Animals and its Implementation Regulation

Dear Esteemed Members of the Constitutional Court,

This letter constitutes an urgent appeal from the *International Organization for Animal Protection (OIPA)* - a non-governmental organization committed to defending animal rights and protecting animals from cruelty and abuse worldwide – for the **annulment of the amendment to Law No. 5199** on the Protection of Animals, published in the Official Gazette on August 2, 2024, and its subsequent implementation regulation published on December 13, 2024.

Since the enactment of these legal instruments, numerous municipalities and individuals hostile to stray animals have carried out mass killings of these vulnerable creatures across Türkiye. This alarming trend directly contradicts international legislation and fundamental principles of animal welfare.

On August 15, 2024, the Republican People's Party rightfully filed a lawsuit for annulment, simultaneously requesting a suspension of enforcement for this deeply flawed law.

This legislation, actively promoted by biased media and amplified by harmful social media, poses a significant threat to public order and the security and peace of communities. The dissemination of information that encourages the isolation and mass killing of stray animals is both morally reprehensible and legally unacceptable.

The tragic consequences of this law are evident in the numerous public instances of animal slaughter, with officials openly citing the law as justification for these inhumane actions.

Furthermore, the law has effectively transformed designated shelters into de facto death camps. Instead of addressing the root causes of the stray animal issue – namely, the negligence of municipalities in fulfilling their duties outlined in Law No. 5199 – the legislation provides a legal framework for the mass capture and subsequent euthanasia of these animals.

We have witnessed with profound sorrow and outrage the horrific treatment of animals within these shelters: prolonged periods of confinement in inadequate conditions, severe deprivation of food and water, and the widespread use of lethal injections as a primary means of "euthanasia."

While the 2021 amendments to Law No. 5199 rightly introduced imprisonment for those who kill pets or domestic animals, the current legislation represents a devastating legal reversal. It

effectively legalizes the mass killing of animals by municipalities, a practice that is both cruel and ethically indefensible.

It is crucial to acknowledge the true contributors to the increase in stray animal populations:

- The continued operation of unregulated animal breeding farms.
- The rampant abandonment of pets by irresponsible owners.
- The persistent failure of municipalities to fulfil their obligations under Law No. 5199.
- The significant increase in the cost of pet food and veterinary care, further exacerbating the challenges faced by animal owners.

Instead of addressing these critical issues, the current legislation focuses solely on the presence of animals on the streets, further marginalizing and endangering these vulnerable creatures.

Moreover, the current law and its accompanying regulations severely hinder adoption efforts and create significant obstacles to the rescue of animals from these death camps. The resulting chaos and unrest within the animal welfare community are a direct consequence of these ill-conceived legislative changes.

In these times of mass isolation and extermination, we implore the esteemed Members of the Constitutional Court to swiftly annul this cruel and inhumane law, which directly contradicts international animal welfare standards and the fundamental principles of a just and compassionate society.

The only acceptable solution is a humane and sustainable approach:

- **Neutering/Spaying:** Implement comprehensive and accessible programs for the neutering and spaying of both stray and owned animals.
- **Vaccination:** Ensure the vaccination of all animals to prevent the spread of disease.
- **Promote Responsible Pet Ownership:** Increase public awareness regarding responsible pet ownership, including the importance of spaying/neutering and the ethical implications of pet abandonment.

We trust that the Constitutional Court will act with compassion and justice, recognizing the gravity of this situation and upholding the fundamental right to life for all sentient beings.

Sincerely,

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