



STRICTER LAWS AGAINST
ANIMAL ABUSE



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An Open Letter to the Israeli DOJ Chief regarding Sanctions towards Animal Abusers

In recent years we witness increasing violent against the weak – i.e. the animals. Cruelty against animals has become a national plague. Statistically, about 85% of all filed police complaints are closed for various reasons without further proceedings. Only a few are produced to the Police Prosecutors, and among those, only a small portion are indicted in courts. Even in cases where indictment is placed, criminals often, too often, get trivial sentences.

The Israeli legislature determined a maximum penalty of 3 years imprisonment as a tag price for committing the offense of cruelty towards animals. In practice, however, sentences imposed on animal abuse criminals, including cases of extreme cruelty, stay far behind the maximum penalty articulated by law, and fail to deter potential criminals.

Thus, a criminal with prior convictions, who smashed the head of a kitten with a hammer, was sentenced to 200 hours of community service plus 6 months probation;

Another criminal, who strangled 5 kittens to death, was sentenced to 8 months probation and restitution;

A law student who shot a dog to death in a residential area and later dumped the body in a garbage bin, was sentenced to 5 months probation, not before after the State appealed since he was initially fully acquitted;

A criminal who threw a dog from the rooftop of a fourth floor and left her to die suffering, was sentenced to 8 months probation and restitution;

A criminal who brutally hit a dog and left him to suffer for 2 hours until he died, was sentenced to 6 months of community service in the Rambam hospital, 9 months probation and restitution.

There is a long list of such horror cases, but the sentences to the perpetrators of these vicious crimes are all alike - probation and ridiculous restitution.

In 2009 a shockingly cruel case was published in the media: a young man from *Kiryat Motskin* broke into his neighbors' garden, kidnapped their Boxer dog (called "Blade") and hit Blade brutally to death. It seems that this cruelty left but little impression on Israeli law enforcement agents, or non at all: a few

months ago, in a plea bargain, the criminal was sentenced to not even a single day in prison. More than 24,000 people signed a petition protesting against this shameful plea bargain and the leniency of the sentence - 6 months imprisonment with permission to perform it as community service and a small restitution.

<http://www.atzuma.co.il/dogg>

The cry of suffer and pain of the animals fails passing the thick walls of courts. Animals cannot complain, and no one asks them for a victim testimony in order to appreciate what they have been through. Instead, a large variety of arguments about the criminals` personal circumstances, mental issues, their difficult economic situations are offered to judges. Unfortunately, many judges choose to consider the criminals' personal circumstances, and to leave the pain of their victims behind. Furthermore, animal abuse criminals sentenced to prison terms usually serve them as community service in the end of the day. Only in rare cases, mostly where other types of crimes are involved, will such criminals be sent to actually serve prison time, and that would also be only for only short periods of time.

We, the citizens of the State of Israel, believe that **lenient punishments are dangerous to society, that they fail to deter criminals and potential criminals, it signals disrespect for basic right for life and welfare, and omits the intention of the Israeli legislature.**

Nearly 80,000 citizens signed a petition calling for stricter punishments towards animal abusers

<http://www.atzuma.co.il/animalprotection>

More than 66,000 people have joined the "Stricter Penalty Against Animal Abuse" Facebook group:

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/group.php?gid=56070673098&ref=ts>

We therefore respectfully address you, asking you to guide the investigation and prosecution authorities as following:

- 1. To avoid closing animal abuse cases before completion of investigations, and to have every complaint thoroughly investigated.**
- 2. To guide prosecutors to demand stricter punishments in animal cruelty cases, and not settle for minor plea bargains when the evidence is not lacking.**
- 3. To guide prosecutors to appeal sentences in cases of minor animal abuse sentences.**

On October 3, we are joining the International Day For Stricter Laws Against Animal Abuse. Fighting violence against the weak, the helpless, and the ones who cannot protect their own rights, is in everyone's interest.

We wish to see Israel among the leading countries in legislation and enforcement against animal cruelty.

We believe that law enforcement authorities' job is to protect the weak, and we ask that prosecution authorities maximize their efforts, in order to instill a significant change in our courts' lenient views on animal abuse.

Regards,

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