

# ANIMAL CRUELTY IN THE UAE: WHO'S LISTENING?

**Disturbing rise in animal abuse cases across country despite Federal Law to protect them**

By Anjana Kumar  
STAFF REPORTER

**DUBAI** Rising incidents of pet cruelty and abandonment are becoming a matter of serious concern for animal welfare groups in the UAE.

Welfare groups say they receive at least 30 distress calls a day from people reporting pet neglect, abuse and abandonment.

Federal Law No. 16 of 2007 protects the rights of animals in the UAE. Mistreatment of animals can result in a one year imprisonment and Dh20,000 fine. According to the law, animals must be given protection from the weather and predators and

be fed a wholesome diet appropriate for their age and species, and receive a continuous supply of fresh drinking water each day.

Animal welfare groups, however say, the law needs to be implemented strictly.

"People don't take the law seriously and rarely report cases of animal abuse. Most of them don't care for animals and just choose to remain quiet about animal abuse.

"Animals are not fashion accessories or toys. They have a life and suffer just like human beings," said Mel Stones, founder, Animal Action - Abu Dhabi, which has rehomed around 700 animals since 2010.



**"What people don't understand is that animals are not fashion accessories or toys"**

**MEL STONES,**  
FOUNDER, ANIMAL ACTION - ABU DHABI

"Not everyone has to love animals and have one in the house to understand the suffering of a pet. Take action and call any animal support

organisation for help. That is the least that you can do to save them," said Stones.

Lesley Muncey, chairperson, Feline Friends Dubai, also urged people to report animal cruelty. "To me, not reporting animal abuse is as bad as keeping quiet about child abuse," she said.

Tania Chernyshova, a volunteer with the Ras Al Khaimah Animal Welfare Centre said a thorough background check of families wanting to adopt pets can save many animals from torture and cruelty.

"In order to get a better understanding of the family looking to adopt a pet, we ask them to fill out adoption

forms. Unfortunately such screening is rarely conducted in pet shops where anybody can buy a pet," she said.

"One of our major goals is to educate people on animal welfare. We do so by running various educational campaigns in Ras Al Khaimah, especially in schools. We run various online campaigns and organise events on responsible pet ownership," she said.

Saddled with over 130 abandoned dogs and cats, Animal Action recently launched a crisis appeal, asking for foster homes.

Stones said this was the worst ever summer as far as abandonment of pets were concerned.

## 10 Shocking Pet Stories

**1.** Three caged rabbits are mercilessly left outside a villa in New Dubai area by their owner before leaving for summer vacation. A maid working in a neighbouring villa informs her employer who takes the rabbits into his house. One rabbit dies, and the other two are severely dehydrated.



**2.** Two cats are left alone in an apartment before the pet owner leaves the country for good. A friend who is supposed to check on the cats and re-home them fails to show up. The pet owner contacts Feline Friends to rescue the cats. With the help of the building security and the permission of the owner, the welfare group manages to rescue the starving cats who probably survived on toilet water for days.



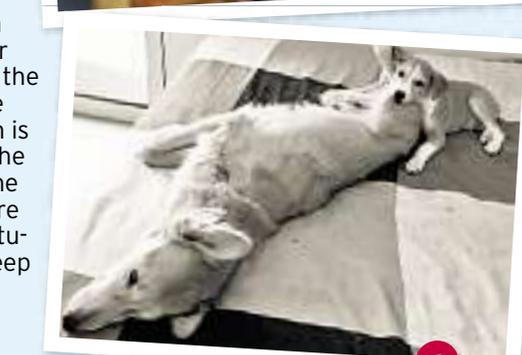
**3.** A caged German Shepherd is left outside a villa in New Dubai. Neighbours in the area ask the pet owner to keep the dog inside. Community residents also take up the matter with Dubai Municipality. The



owner promises to build an air-conditioned kennel for the dog - but nothing is done about it.

**4.** A badly injured female Arabian Mau (around six months old) is abandoned in the garden of a villa in Jumeirah by her owner who leaves for Eid holiday. Feline Friends receives a call from a community member to rescue the kitten. She lures her with some food and water and manages to get the cat out. The cat looks like she is about to die. She has been tossed around and played with like a toy by a child living in the villa. Her hind legs are broken with the bones and muscles visible to the naked eye. The skin is completely splattered all the way into her abdomen. She is stinking and her eyes are dilated. The kitten unfortunately has to be put to sleep as euthanasia is the only humane act left for her.

**5.** In what must surely rank among the worst cases of neglect, a pet owner abandons eight dogs in his Tecom villa in unimaginably filthy conditions. The dogs are rescued by an animal activist with the help of a neighbour. Three of the dogs, a chihuahua and her two puppies are seen sitting on their own faeces, looking listless in a bathroom where they are kept without food and water for days.



**6.** Two mixed-breed stray dogs (a male and a pregnant female) have acid thrown on them by people who do not want them living in their building in Al Ain. The male dog suffers severe burns and soon dies. Millie, the female dog, however returns to the building to litter her puppies. Animal Action - Abu Dhabi is called in to re-home the mum

and her puppies. Millie is now in a foster home with a couple in another building and one of her puppies is adopted by a family living just three floors apart.

**7.** Naji, a male greyhound is dumped at the doorstep of the Ras Al Khaimah Animal Welfare Centre in Ras Al Khaimah. The dog is extremely malnourished and has a bad case of ascites (fluid retention in the abdomen due to poor nutrition). He has several open wounds with maggots in them and is suffering from Ehrlichia - a tick borne disease. The welfare centre soon begins treatment of the dog with a vet. Fluid from his abdomen is drained out and he is nothing but a skeleton. Unfortunately, despite all efforts taken by the vet, the dog dies.



**8.** An adult male husky - Whisper - is kept inside a puppy carrier by his pet owner. The dog is rescued from the owner by Animal Action - Abu Dhabi who claims the husky is only four months old. A visit to the vet, however, reveals Whisper is all of two years and is the runt of his litter. The husky is malnourished and looks terribly frightened. He squeezes into his carrier to feel safe every now and then. The dog is now

receiving treatment and is showing signs of improved social behaviour.



**9.** A mixed-breed female desert dog is found by a passerby in the Al Khawaneej area with a wire around its neck. She is being chased by children who beat her and pelt her with stones. The dog is rescued by the passerby who takes her to Modern Veterinary Clinic in Jumeirah. The dog suffers horrific wounds as the wire slices into her neck tissues. The incision from the wire rips her trachea muscles so badly that a few millimeters deeper could have proved fatal.



**10.** A maid living in a villa in Jumeirah is seen carrying a cat and her kittens in a bin liner and is seen dumping them in a garbage bin. A neighbour calls Feline Friends to rescue the cats. The neighbour unfortunately fails to report the matter to relevant authorities for fear of being recognised by the maid. The rescued cats are malnourished and have been left starving.



Note: Case-studies provided by Animal Action - Abu Dhabi, Feline Friends, Modern Veterinary Clinic, Ras Al Khaimah Animal Welfare Centre and some compiled by XPRESS research