

Ending Animal Abuse for the Proper Application of Animal Rights

Forum: General Assembly

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Introduction

Voices of emphasis towards the need to secure the rights of animals worldwide have been raised throughout the past two centuries. The official recognition of the United Nations towards the issue can be dated back to 1978 by United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) through its Universal Declaration of Animal Rights. However, the rights of the animals remained under the shadow of insecurity of gender/race rights or economic turmoil. As of 2020, the COVID-19 crisis had further hindered the proper application of animal rights due to the improper employment of human rights. While it has already been approved by the scientific circles that the disease is transmittable for both humans and animals, measures to prevent animals from being infected are not mentioned at all. Moreover, the reports or statistical data of animals that are infected with the disease are not prevalent and those animals are rather exploited by humans to find the cure to the disease itself. Such inhumane treatment of animals by mankind throughout history until this day connects to the core belief in which the supporters of animal rights oppose: speciesism. In other words, humans have continued to undervalue all kinds of animals under the feet of humans especially at times of synchronous crises and disasters.

Background

Before the 20th century, the idea of animal rights remained generally conceptual and vague, lacking the actions to bring about changes in the people's thoughts. An American Philosopher Tom Regan marked, "[P]hilosophers had written more about animal rights in the previous 20 years than in the 2,000 years before that." It was only after the 20th century when the first animal rights movement started with vegetarianism, through the root organization of vegetarianism called "English Vegetarian Society." Further developing into the "International Vegetarian Union," the organization gradually expressed the morals and benefits of being a vegetarian as well as the aftermath of consuming animal products along with the support of Mahatma Gandhi in 1931.



The first International Vegetarian Union of World

After World War II, the demand for animals rose significantly along with global industrialization and economic expansion, which fostered the rise of animal rights groups to

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counter the intense oppression of the animals for research and farming purposes. In the 1960s, the United Kingdom took the lead on securing animal rights by banning most forms of one-sided animal abuse such as hunting or blood sports. Bloodsports, which includes any forms of baiting or fratricidal violence such as dogfight or cockfight, were particularly criticized for their immorality, thereby leading to the end of the tradition.

Following the lead of the UK, many scholars from various countries agreed upon the severe degree of animal abuse existing for the benefit of mankind. The zenithal work of such combined interests was the publication of the book “Animal Liberation” in 1975, which claimed that there are no grounds for mankind to abuse the basic rights of animals while securing the basic rights of their own, for no species are above other species. Coining the term “speciesism,” the author of the book, Singer underscored that the idea in which humanity has a right to rule over other species is just an unethical, unreasonable belief of humanity in the superiority of themselves over other species.

Parties/Organizations Involved

Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA)



First established in 1824, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is a non-profit animal welfare organization that is based in numerous countries worldwide on all continents. With the freedom of holding campaigns and urging for regulations or policies according to the laws of each nation that the branch is based in, each SPCA operates unaffiliated to each other. Thus, the campaigns for animal welfare or activities to prevent cruelty to animals conducted by individual branch varies. Through their four-pillar activities – Education Initiatives, Military Support, Veterinary Supply Aid, and Shelter Support Fund – each SPCA branch has been successfully making notable accomplishment such as education of spay and neuter effectiveness in multiple bases, over 500 pets being relocated through military support, and partnerships with other organizations such as the Putnam Country Society in the United States or the Red de Apoyo Canino in Venezuela: all of which were achieved within the year 2019.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)

Founded in March 1980, the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals is an animal rights organization like the SPCA, but with stronger connections between individual offices located worldwide. With its motto “*Animals are not ours to experiment on, eat, wear, use for entertainment, or abuse in any other way,*” PETA does not focus on certain aspects of animal rights, rather deals with any actions that are considered as animal abuse and may harm animal rights. Meeting its 40th anniversary since establishment as of the year 2020, the organization is being spotlighted for the numerous investigations made by the organization toward various animals including sheep shearing in Australia, pigeon-racing in Taiwan, or animal abuse of a major biological product-sales company to sell animals or organs



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of animals for anatomical purposes. Although the organization has been consistently criticized for its inappropriate campaigns by certain radical members, the achievements made by the organization at both national and international levels are undeniable.

World Animal Protection (WAP)

As one of the few formally recognized animals rights group by the United Nations, World Animal Protection is an international non-profit animal welfare organization founded in 1981 as a merger of two former organizations: the World Federation for the Protection of Animals (WFPA) and the International Society for the Protection of Animals (ISPA). The organization has been consistently holding campaigns worldwide to animal abuse in the wild, the farming industry, etc. As a result of such persisted campaigns and advocacy of the Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare, the issue of animal abuse on agriculture and disaster risk reduction was included in the UN General Assembly resolutions in 2013.



World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

Serving as an organization for both environmental issues and animal rights issues, the World Wide Fund for Nature is the largest international non-governmental organization with the largest supporter group, fund, and conducted projects. One of the most notable features of the WWF is that they cooperate with multinational corporates such as Coca-Cola, Lafarge, or IKEA to promote the security of animal rights, which facilitates global prevention of animal abuse. Outside such corporate partnerships, individual branches of WWF worldwide actively take measures to prevent immoral activities that violate animal rights.



Places of High Concern

Iran

As of 2020, Iran does not have any legal measures to prevent any forms of animal cruelty. In fact, the Iranian government does not recognize a specific sector of the ministry of their government to be responsible for this issue. Iranian government's fundamental complexity of the legislative processes to draft relevant regulations is further hindering the chances of the issue being resolved. The consequence of such lacking protection of animals is typically shown through the way Iran deals with the abandoned dogs. Under the title of euthanasia, related organizations inject sulfuric acid to the dogs, which leads them to slowly die while each of their blood vessels in their body melts down. Furthermore, the fact that this is not a protocol drafted by a group of individuals but the Iranian government itself further raises concerns about the low awareness of the aftermath and immorality of animal abuse.

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China

With the ambiguous standard of animal cruelty, the Chinese government is inattentive to sentience or the pain the animals feel when they are used. This is particularly vindicated through a governmental policy of China that requires all foreign cosmetics companies to run animal testing to acquire governmental certification or verification on the quality of their products. Moreover, the nation displays quite an indefinite attitude when it comes to the transparency of its policies and status quo. With one of the largest markets and industries located in its territory, China is regarded as one of the most concerning places regarding the issue.

Japan

Although the country has a form of law that prevents animal abuse, the legislation confines the category of the animals as “pets” – meaning that farming animals or wild animals can be abused anytime. Also, the degree of punishment given to those who violate the law is being criticized for its weakness. According to the legislation, as long as one does not kill or injure his/her pet, the person will be free from any potential imprisonment. Lacking any form of committee or board to maintain and execute the legislation pertinent to the issue, Japan is recognized as one of the urgent nations to modify and reinforce its regulations related to animal abuse.

Republic of Korea

The Republic of Korea indeed has relatively comprehensive regulations of animal abuse compared to its neighboring state: Japan. However, Korea still is being equally criticized for the weakness of the degree in their punishments. As an example, the maximum degree of punishment for animal abuse is merely a year or a shorter period of imprisonment, and a penalty of 10 million Korean Won or lower. Moreover, the need for protocols to tackle animal attacks toward a human is not recognized as well. For instance, the noise from any kind of pet cannot legally be punished because it is not a sound made by a human being. Also, there are no laws to protect the rights of the deceased man in the case of an animal killing a bystander. As such, the weak punishment for a criminal who violated animal rights is an issue, but what is more critical is that human rights abuse by animals does not only have any assured punishments but also not even recognized as “harm.”

Possible Solutions

Global Treaty Over Individual/Regional/National Treaties

Currently, the issue of animal rights lacks any kind of global treaty in the United Nations except the Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare (UDAW) which merely “declares” the basic rights of animals instead of urging for proper treatments of them or prevention of further animal abuse. Many states that are not supportive of the declaration are making arbitrary regulations according to their favor,



General Assembly in 1975 addressing on the Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare

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which obscures animal rights from being equally secured worldwide. Just like how states cooperated and drafted the Geneva Protocol or Chemical Weapons Convention, the creation of a global treaty over individual laws on each specific issue of animal abuse will ensure that member states are aware of and protecting the rights of the animals. Meanwhile, the utilization of non-governmental organizations that are actively engaged in this issue will be an efficient way to successfully draft and promote the treaty over the member states of the United Nations.

Glossary

Animal Abuse: the act of putting an animal in distress through deprivation of adequate resources, international injury or sickness, and ignorance.

Animal Testing: procedures performed on animals for purposes of research into basic biology and diseases, assessing the effectiveness of new medicinal products, and testing the human health and/or environment safety of consumer and industry products such as cosmetics, household cleaners, food additives, pharmaceuticals and industrial/agro-chemicals.

Animal Rights: the rights of animals to live free from human exploitation and abuse.

Pet: any domestic or tamed animal that has commonly been kept in family households for companionship or pleasure.

Speciesism: the idea that being human is a legitimate reason for human animals to have greater moral rights than non-human animals leading to the exploitation of animals.

Vegetarianism: a person who does not eat any meat, poultry, game, fish, shellfish or by-products of animal slaughter for moral, religious, or health reasons.

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