

PRESS NOTE

For Immediate Release

Location: Chandigarh

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THE VOICELESS 'PRISONERS' OF CHANDIGARH

Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has become
Society for Promotion of Cruelty to Animals

0.6% FUNDS FOR MEDICINE, 3% FOR FOOD & 96% FOR SALARIES

Harrowing Scenes of Suffering, Neglect & Gross Mismanagement at SPCA Chandigarh

The intention of this press conference is to bring into public discourse, the grim & inhumane conditions of SPCA, the only Govt. run veterinary shelter in Chandigarh, which has over 200 small and large animals at any given time. Year after year, despite failed audits, critical volunteer intervention & donation, this place where animals are supposed to come for treatment and care, has become a notorious place where they face immense physical & mental trauma and are lucky to survive the torment (mortality rate being abnormally high).

About the Facilities:

Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) is a government-run veterinary hospital cum shelter in Sector 38 West, Chandigarh. The facility received an annual grant from Chandigarh administration of **~Rs. 96 lakhs for the FY 2023-24** as per RTI (attached). A separate facility under the MC is the Animal Birth Control (ABC) center in Raipur Kalan, Chandigarh. It is to be noted that **the purpose and modus operandi of both these facilities is entirely different**. The facility at Raipur Kalan is **NOT A SHELTER** in any shape or form but an ABC center, wherein dogs are to be neutered, kept for ~3 to 5 days for observation / medication in individual kennels and then released. **It is designed to curb population growth which will ultimately address the issue of aggression and rising dog bite cases but is now being misused.**

Recent Development:

SPCA-38 received approval for renovation as the infrastructure was in dire need of repairs and fixing. As expected, the transition has proved to be a nightmare for the beneficiaries of this facility – on April 29, 2025, due to yet-to-start renovations at SPCA-38, shelter animals, primarily dogs, were brutally and thoughtlessly shifted to the defunct Raipur Kalan ABC center.

The Unfortunate Reality:

1. The Raipur Kalan Facility

- a. These small animals from SPCA-38 have now been in **confinement** in small kennels at Raipur Kalan measuring ~4 by 3 feet laden with **faeces, urine, blood & rampant infection** without any space for movement for **TWO MONTHS**. This is **suffocating, unlawful and detrimental to their health**. As per **Section 11 (1) (g) of The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960**, neglect to exercise for any dog kept in close confinement is a form of cruelty and a **punishable offence**. Helpless shelter dogs can be seen trying to get out from under the kennel doors and biting on door grills crying all the while, even injuring themselves in the process

- (video to be shown & provided). Many large dogs cannot even fully fit into the kennels. **Many healthy dogs are not being released.**
- b. **This will inevitably lead to the development of undesirable, aggressive behaviours, which will become a menace to public safety when these misunderstood souls are released back to the place they were picked from according to the law.**
 - c. Kennel blocks in Raipur Kalan have become breeding grounds for diseases like canine distemper, tick fever and skin infections. **This also poses a public health hazard when these animals are released back to the streets.**
 - d. There is severe water shortage – no water to clean kennels, cook food, wash hands, drink - **a hospital in Chandigarh functioning without water.**
 - e. **Paralyzed dogs** lie on hard floor in their own faeces/urine with uncleaned bodies, bed sores, exposed bones – they do not survive. No worker makes an effort to feed them as they cannot reach for water/food themselves – survival rate is next to 0.
 - f. There are **no CCTVs in the facility** to monitor the animals, provide any evidence of mishandling by staff or worse.
 - g. **Volunteers, the lifeline of SPCA**, have been cut off given its distant and isolated location, with safety concerns for primarily women volunteers. **The staff, notorious and infamous for neglect, has been immunized from public scrutiny by giving them an opaque space on the outskirts of Chandigarh.**
- 2. Systemic and long unaddressed problems at SPCA**
- a. Shockingly disproportionate fund usage
 - i. **As per RTI**, out of a total ~Rs. 96 lakhs annual grant by ANHUS to SPCA for financial year 2023-2024, ~Rs. 92 lakhs went to salaries. It is outrageous that only Rs. 57,565 or 0.6% was spent on medicines and hospital expenses, and only Rs. 3,30,555 or 3% on food – the reason for the very existence of this facility. This is for 150+ injured and sick dogs, cats, monkeys, birds and other small animals along with a similar number of large animals including cows, donkeys and horses.
 - ii. **This is not new** – as per case **Abhishek Bhateja vs Union Of India And Others on 7 April, 2022**, ‘Current budget is Rs.70 lakhs out of which Rs.60 lakhs is for salary head and 90% of the remaining amount is used for monthly electricity bills, phone bills, water bill and fuel charges’.
 - iii. Ballpark estimates for treatment and basic nourishment for ~100 small animals and ~100 large animals are **~Rs. 7 lakhs for medicines and ~Rs. 24 lakhs for food – in one year** (see estimates provided separately).
 - b. **Animal Welfare Board of India’s (AWBI) 2020 inspection report on SPCA, Sector 38, Chandigarh**, noted glaring irregularities like manual records, non-functional ambulance, lack of qualified and trained staff, 90% of the funds going to salaries, extreme malnutrition of animals, treatment by non-veterinary staff, lack of blood work and X-rays, allegations against the SPCA Field Inspector for serious financial misdemeanours and numerous other appalling lapses. Rectification of the shortcomings were sought by the Board – this is 5 years ago, conditions continue to be same, in fact worse (available on www.sehjeevi.org).
 - c. Despite this 96% of the grant for salaries, SPCA staff are extremely negligent, pathogenic liars, apathetic towards their duty, hostile towards injured animals manhandling them, un- or under-qualified and thick-skinned. Because of all this, **injured animals are suffering silently in fear, thirst, hunger, lying untreated in**

unhygienic conditions, now also confined. They then either pass away writhing in pain or are released in that very state back into society.

3. Another disturbing information coming to light is that because of the failed ABC program at Raipur Kalan, the administration is now planning to club the mismanaged SPCA and the defunct ABC program together, and does not intend to bring SPCA back to Sector 38, Chandigarh, which is why no construction work has been started.
 - a. A failed facility which already has only one junior veterinary doctor on duty at a time for 200+ SPCA shelter animals will now be burdened beyond imagination and exploited for the entire city's ABC program? Again, complete ruination in progress of two facilities with entirely different objectives. It has been released in the newspapers that the ABC program has started in Raipur Kalan but there is rampant infection, lack of sanitation and hygiene there. A program being run in these conditions will lead to spread of infectious diseases in society.

Closing Remarks and Appeal:

SPCA at Raipur Kalan has become a torture house / concentration camp. Confining dogs in small unsanitary kennels indefinitely without basic food or treatment and then releasing them into society will not help address the problem of rising dog bites but will make it worse. **Even prisoners are entitled to access open grounds for their mental and physical health.**

Instead of being a place where animals would receive care, love and decent shelter in times of hardship they are faced with cold, ruthless, abusive and inhumane treatment. **The living condition of animals is a reflection of society's progress towards a civilized and humane state.** Chandigarh despite being a smart city, with above average literacy, abundant resources, still remains disappointingly elusive to the idea of humane animal welfare.

Our appeals:

1. **Immediate relief measures for animals who have not walked freely for 2 MONTHS.**
2. **Official inquiry into hasty & unprepared shifting of SPCA animals to Raipur Kalan; Disciplinary action against official(s) responsible for executing and overseeing transition for lack of prearrangement & unpreparedness directly harming animals.**
3. **Official investigation into shocking expense allocation ongoing for years;**
4. **Temporary suspension of SPCA operations until renovations in Sector 38 are completed given years' long continued infliction of cruelty, violations, scarcity of funds for food and medicine;**
5. **No clubbing of SPCA operations and MC's ABC program as they have entirely different mandates to be managed independently with separate infrastructure, veterinary staff and oversight.**

Animals and humans have to coexist peacefully and happily by taking positive steps for betterment of both. They should be released from SPCA back into the world in a way that they do not harm anyone but integrate smoothly. **Facilities and resources have been provided by the Government but they need to be channelized correctly to be effective.** Journalists, authorities and importantly the kind-hearted residents of Chandigarh are requested to regularly visit the facility themselves & raise their voice for the voiceless who **do not represent a vote bank and have no relatives who will come and fight for them at the "hospital".**