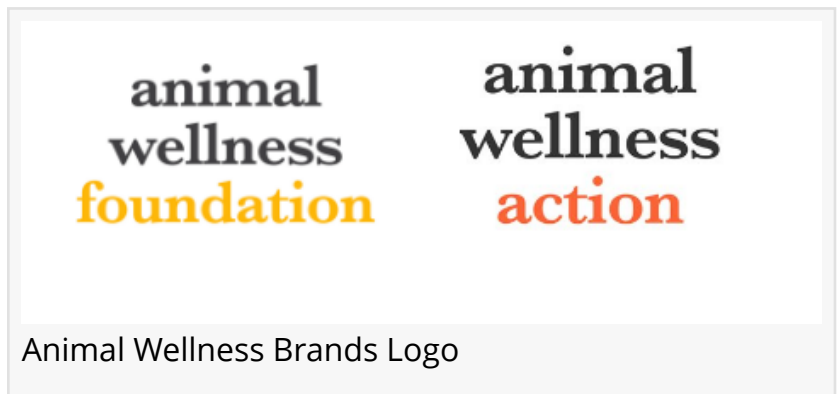


After Dog Neglect & Suffering, Animal Wellness Demands End to State Depart. Program Transferring Bomb-Sniffing Dogs

Groups Asks State Department to Send Them Back Home for Adoption

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, December 24, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Animal Wellness Foundation (AWF) and Animal Wellness Action (AWA) are calling for an immediate end to a Department of State (Department) program to send highly trained antiterrorism bomb-sniffing dogs to Jordan and Egypt after more dogs have died of non-natural, preventable causes.



“This program has been badly bungled from the start, and too many dogs have suffered and died in the line of duty because of human negligence and disregard,” said Jennifer Skiff, director of International Programs for Animal Wellness Action. “These are living creatures, not war machines.”

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Three months after an Office of the Inspector General (IG) report recommended suspending the Department’s Explosive Detection Canine Program’s (EDCP) partnership with Jordan, a new report reveals even more dog fatalities. At the time of the original report, the IG asked the

Department to “cease providing dogs to Jordan until there was a sustainability plan in place to ensure their health and welfare.” The Department opposed that recommendation.

Today, after learning of the deaths of five more canines in Jordan and Egypt (including poisoning in kennels and heat stroke) the Department belatedly acceded to a suspension of the program to certain countries. The Department has, however, stated it will not bring the dogs still in Jordan back to the United States.

“Dogs are dying of neglect, starvation, tick-borne illness and heat stroke,” added Skiff. “The Department has been well aware of dog mistreatment and mishandling, yet the problems persist. This is no way to repay animals who risk their lives for our safety. We really have no idea if they are suffering this same fate in a half dozen other nations.”

AWA began investigating the Department’s EDCP Program shortly after the IG reported that dogs provided to Jordan were dying of unnatural causes. It condemned the Department’s program. The IG noted that the Department routinely provides dogs to foreign partners without signed written agreements that outline standards of minimum care, retirement, and use of the canines, and the Department conducts health and welfare follow-ups infrequently and inconsistently. The IG report also stated that it had “ongoing concerns regarding the program in Jordan, where

health and welfare problems have persisted for years.”

In the wake of the original IG report, AWA reached out to officials in Jordan, offering to retire all EDCP canines in their care. The country responded by stating that 17 dogs had, in the past 24 months, been returned to the USA for retirement. AWA notes that Jordan has received more than 89 dogs, but the State Department has never provided a full accounting of their whereabouts. There are questions about the fate of 40 or so who were in the care of Jordan in 2018, even though they should have been retired according to the terms of the program.

Just last week, State Department spokesman Anthony Smith responded to AWA’s offer to assist with a letter. “I am happy to report that we have taken concrete measures to improve the health and welfare of EDC’s abroad,” he said. The Department denied AWA’s offer to bring the dogs back to the United States for retirement in homes or sanctuaries.

Over the past few weeks, AWA has been negotiating to bring dogs of retirement age who were reportedly languishing in diseased-riddled kennels in Jordan back home. The organization is now calling for an immediate end to the EDCP program in Jordan and Egypt. “Our offer to bring the dogs in the program home stands” Skiff added.

Senator Patrick Leahy, D-Vermont, Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, and Congresswoman Donna Shalala, D-Fla., wrote to the State Department expressing concerns about the mistreatment of dogs and demanding accountability for this multi-million-dollar program.

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The Animal Wellness Foundation (Foundation) is a Los Angeles-based private charitable organization with a mission of helping animals by making veterinary care available to everyone with a pet, regardless of economic ability. We organize rescue efforts and medical services for dogs and cats in need and help homeless pets find a loving caregiver. We are advocates for getting veterinarians to the front lines of the animal welfare movement; promoting responsible pet ownership; and vaccinating animals against infectious diseases such as distemper. We also support policies that prevent animal cruelty and that alleviate suffering. We believe helping animals helps us all.

Animal Wellness Action (Action) is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) organization with a mission of helping animals by promoting legal standards forbidding cruelty. We champion causes that alleviate the suffering of companion animals, farm animals, and wildlife. We advocate for policies to stop dogfighting and cockfighting and other forms of malicious cruelty and to confront factory farming and other systemic forms of animal exploitation. To prevent cruelty, we promote enacting good public policies and we work to enforce those policies. To enact good laws, we must elect good lawmakers, and that’s why we remind voters which candidates care about our issues and which ones don’t. We believe helping animals helps us all.

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