

Hope for Nigeria's donkeys as African Union approves ban on slaughter for skins

African Heads of State agree a landmark decision to protect donkeys at the 37th African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 17-18 February.

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, February 19, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The African Union's endorsement of a continent-wide moratorium on the slaughter of donkeys for their skin, recognises, at the highest level of decision-making, the vital importance of donkeys across Africa.

The collective commitment from Member States to safeguard the welfare of Africa's estimated 33 million-strong donkey population comes after [recent figures published by The Donkey Sanctuary](#) reveal that globally, at least 5.9 million donkeys are slaughtered for their skins every year to meet demand for the traditional Chinese remedy ejiao.

Following the rapid decline of China's own donkey population for this reason, escalating demand for ejiao has led to a sharp increase in the slaughter of donkeys, posing a significant threat to their populations in many regions of Africa.

By ratifying the moratorium on donkey slaughter African leaders have struck a crucial blow against this barbaric trade, helping to protect not only donkeys but also the communities that rely on them.

This decision sends a strong and unified message from Africa's Heads of State to the world about the urgent need to safeguard the future of these valuable animals.

Dr Otieno Mtula, Regional Campaigns and Advocacy Manager for The Donkey Sanctuary, said: "This is a truly significant moment for donkeys and the people who rely on them, in Africa, and



Donkeys being transported in a truck from a market in Tanzania

around the world. However, this is just the beginning – this decision must be implemented by each and every country that makes up the African Union and enshrined in law. We will continue to work closely with our colleagues and partners across Africa, to provide all the support and resources we can, to see this commitment to a ban on the slaughter of donkeys for their skins become a reality across Africa and the start of a new era for donkey welfare.”

Dr Calvin Solomon Onyango, Director of The Donkey Sanctuary in Kenya, said: “This is a pivotal moment in the protection of one of Africa’s most vital, and yet most overlooked, species. Donkeys in Africa face a very real existential threat due to the skin trade. Here in Africa, we see first-hand its devastating impact, not just the horrific treatment of these gentle animals, but also the effect it has on women, children and the communities who rely on donkeys for their social and economic lives.

“That African Leaders have made the collective decision to protect their donkey populations and implement a ban on the slaughter of donkeys for their skins, is truly a game-changer in ending this brutal trade.”

[Marianne Steele](#), Chief Executive of The Donkey Sanctuary, said: “This is a truly momentous result for the welfare of donkeys in Africa. The decision to ban the slaughter of donkeys for the skin trade is enormous. Donkeys are sensitive and intelligent creatures who deserve protection for their own sakes, and for the countless communities who rely on them.

“This agreement from leaders of the African Union strikes at the heart of the brutal skin trade. It’s our hope that this decision will act as a catalyst for the rest of the world to act now, to not just save our donkey populations but to actively recognise their value and protect them properly.”

The Donkey’s Sanctuary’s campaign to Stop the Slaughter is the single biggest donkey protection initiative the charity has undertaken in over 50 years of operation. Those who want to support the campaign can sign up to receive regular updates, and any donation made will support work to improve the welfare of donkeys everywhere, including this campaign.

The Donkey Sanctuary is an international animal welfare charity dedicated to improving the lives of donkeys and mules worldwide. Headquartered in Devon, UK, we provide lifelong care to over 7,000 donkeys across the UK and Europe, through our ten sanctuaries and guardian homes, and we reach many more globally thanks to our international programmes and partnerships. Our colleagues are based all over the world and we work with a global network of partners, NGOs and governments, who share our vision of a world where every donkey has a good quality of life.

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