

Morocco's Draft Animal Welfare Law Conflicts with Its Own Rabies-Control Agreement

International animal welfare organizations urge amendments to Draft Law 19-25 to honor Morocco's commitment to humane Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Release strategy

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, May 27, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Center for a Humane Economy](#) and SPCA International are calling on the Moroccan government to amend Draft Law 19-25 before its passage, warning that the proposed legislation contradicts Morocco's own 2019 national agreement establishing humane Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Release (TNVR) as the country's official strategy for managing stray dog populations and eliminating rabies. The organizations [sent a letter](#) to Moroccan officials urging them to amend their draft legislation to ensure animal welfare and public health are honored.

If passed, Law 19-25 would criminalize citizens who provide food, shelter, or healthcare to stray animals, and leave legal doors open for mass killings of dogs, which animal welfare groups in Morocco have documented over the past several years.

"The leaders of Morocco's government made a promise to eradicate rabies humanely and effectively using TNVR. We were there when that promise was made and have been working with and funding charities on the ground to see its fruition," said Jennifer Skiff, director of international programs for the Center for a Humane Economy. "What is happening now — the mass killings of dogs and proposed legislation that criminalizes compassion — is the antithesis of humane and is a giant step backward."

In 2019, Morocco's government signed the Convention on the Protection of Street Dogs and Cats, a comprehensive framework that established TNVR as the cornerstone of national rabies-control



Photo Courtesy: We Are Wildlife

policy. The agreement was signed by the Ministry of the Interior, the National Office of Sanitary Safety of Food Products (ONSSA), the Ministry of Health, and the National Order of Veterinarians.

Draft Law 19-25 contradicts many of the commitments outlined in the 2019 agreement and risks undermining both humane animal management and public health progress. The organizations point out that while it introduces some positive elements, including criminal penalties for animal cruelty, it also contains troubling provisions that contradict the 2019 convention, which explicitly relied on community participation and required sterilized and vaccinated animals to be returned to the neighborhoods where they were captured. TNVR programs depend on community guardians who provide food and basic care to returned animals. Without community support, sterilized and vaccinated dogs cannot survive after release.

“By allowing compassionate citizens to participate in TNVR, Morocco can humanely stabilize stray populations while maintaining vaccinated resident dogs that naturally defend their territories against unvaccinated newcomers,” said Dr. Thomas Pool, senior veterinarian for Animal Wellness Action. “Culling achieves none of this. Research has shown that rabies requires one of the lowest vaccine coverage thresholds of any disease to break transmission. Criminalizing TNVR volunteers would undermine Morocco’s own strategy, drive up long-term costs, and move the country further from its goal of zero dog-mediated rabies deaths.”

The proposed law, as written, also grants the government broad authority to act in undefined “exceptional circumstances.” This provision opens the door for the mass culling of dogs, which [animal welfare groups have documented](#) as occurring regularly. Animals killed include healthy dogs with ear-tags that confirm they have been vaccinated and sterilized.

Lori Kalef, director of programs for SPCA International, said her organization invested in Morocco’s humane infrastructure because officials initially demonstrated a genuine commitment to reform.

“SPCA International invested in Morocco’s animal welfare infrastructure because we saw genuine commitment to change,” Kalef said. “Learning that the dogs we helped TNVR are being killed is devastating. It suggests the law may be less about animal protection and more about maintaining population control authority while appearing to meet international standards. A law that makes it illegal to feed a hungry animal isn’t an animal welfare law. Morocco has veterinarians, committed advocates, and caring citizens ready to support humane programs. The government needs to work with these people, not against them.”

The World Health Organization has consistently stated that mass dog vaccination — not culling — is the most effective method for controlling rabies. When vaccinated dogs are removed from a population, herd immunity declines and populations are quickly repopulated by unvaccinated animals.

Photo Note: Editors are encouraged to include images of ear-tagged TNVR dogs. The ear tag serves as visible proof that the animal has been sterilized and vaccinated, highlighting the humane program at the center of this issue.

ABOUT

The Center for a Humane Economy is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(3) whose mission is to help animals by helping forge a more humane economic order. The first organization of its kind in the animal protection movement, the Center encourages businesses to honor their social responsibilities in a culture where consumers, investors, and other key stakeholders abhor cruelty and the degradation of the environment and embrace innovation as a means of eliminating both. The Center believes helping animals helps us all.

<http://centerforahumaneconomy.org>

SPCA International is a global animal welfare organization with a mission that is simple, but vast: to advance the safety and well-being of animals. Through outreach, rescue and education programs, SPCA International spearheads lifesaving initiatives and assists grassroots animal activists worldwide. Visit us at <https://www.spcai.org/>

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