



Urgent Actions Needed to Address Cruelty Against Animals

Colombo, Sri Lanka - Animal Welfare Coalition of Sri Lanka condemns the cruelty addressed to a leopard that was killed in the in Ginigathhena, by unidentified individuals. The animals is said to have been caught in a trap set in a tea estate, and then brutality tortured by its paws being chopped off, and killed. The Coalition expresses is shocked at the inhumanity of the treatment of the animal and highlight the need for laws that will take robust actions against perpetrators of cruelty towards animals.

Wild animals of Sri Lanka are protected under the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance which has as its objective to conserve the wildlife heritage of Sri Lanka. Under the Ordinance, it is an offence to hunt,, kill any animal in a Strict Natural Reserve, National Park, Nature Reserve or Jungle Corridor, and provides that “no person shall hunt, shoot, kill or take any wild animal, or take or destroy any egg of any bird or reptile or any nest of any bird, in any Sanctuary”. [3, 44 of 1964.]

Further the Cruelty to Animals Ordinance of Sri Lanka (1907) in section 2 (a) provides that it is an offence to cruelly beat, abuse or torture an animal. However, the law remains restricted and with limited application due to its penalties which is a LKR 100 fine/ and 3 months imprisonment, and the difficulties that is creates due to the definition of animals which excluders wild animals, and only includes any animal that is domestic or captured, and includes any fish, reptile, or bird in captivity.

“The cruel acts committed against the leopard that is in question could be considered as falling under the 1907 Ordinance as it as an animal in captivity at the time of the acts being committed against it. It is absolutely shocking the cruelty of the acts, and actions such as these should be punished,” said Convener of the Animal Welfare Coalition, Attorney-at-Law, Vositha Wijenayake.

She further highlighted the need to address the human animal conflict in an efficient manner, which will reduce the tensions between animals and humans.

“It is important that human animal conflicts are addressed in an efficient manner, and not ignored. If they are addressed effectively, the tensions between humans and animals become lesser. This could contribute to not having to face situations such as the ones we are facing. And we need the Animal Welfare Bill to be enacted so as to address issues of cruelty to animals in an effective manner,” she said.

Animal Welfare Coalition is a collective of organisations working with the objective of advocating, and lobbying for animal welfare in SRI Lanka, and addressing curbing cruelty to animals in the country.

For further information please contact:

Amayaa Wijesinghe, volunteer at Animal Welfare Coalition on amayaawijesinghe@gmail.com/
+94773426535

Avanthi Jayasuriya, volunteer at Animal Welfare Coalition, Programme Officer of SLYCAN Trust on avanthijay91@gmail.com/ +94 117446238



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