

OPEN LETTER TO THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND LAND RECLAMATION OF THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

To the Honorable El-Sayed El-Quseir
Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation
Arab Republic of Egypt

12th September 2022

Dear Minister El-Sayed El-Quseir,

we, the undersigning, urge you to take immediate action to stop the maltreatment of dromedary camels destined for slaughter in Egypt.

Severe maltreatment of camels is reported from Birqash camel market since years. But so far, the Egyptian authorities have not taken the necessary measures to put an end to this severe animal abuse.

Birqash camel market is known as one of the largest hubs for 'slaughter' camels in the Middle East. On a weekly basis, thousands of dromedary camels are traded here. The camels arrive to the market after very long transports carried out under the most precarious conditions: overcrowding, permanent and inappropriate restraining, lack of shelter from weather conditions, no water, no food. At the market, sheer brute violence dominates the terrain. The camels are beaten including in their faces and genitals, they are kicked, pushed, and poked. Shouting, screaming and running replaces calm and thoughtful handling of the animals there. Non-ambulant animals are even beaten harder to see if they can muster the last of their strength to be hoisted onto a slaughter transport. Veterinary treatment is nonexistent. Parasite infestations and communicable diseases in the animals are ignored.

Walking through the market area, one looks into the bloody faces of the beaten animals. Blood runs from their nostrils and eyes. Broken jaws and lacerations are not uncommon. Countless hematomas must cover the bodies of the maltreated camels.

Young boys copy their fathers' behavior. Violence makes up the everyday life of children in the market who are supposed to be sitting at school desks.



Alerted by an international animal rights organization, back in 2019, local media reported about the alarming situation at the market. As a result, the authorities undertook short-term actions on the market that quickly died down again. Even repeated and constant efforts and reporting by other animal welfare organizations could not persuade the Egyptian authorities to take consistent action.

Today, the situation in Birqash is as cruel as it was three years ago and probably has been for the last decades.

Please also see: <https://youtu.be/lfilqMa4Sxl>

While the Egyptian Constitution commits to the prevention of cruelty to animals, Egypt has not yet adopted any legal framework to ensure proper treatment and protection to farmed animals. At the same time, Egypt is member of the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) and thus committed itself to comply with the agreed international animal welfare standards. Unfortunately, the country is far from that.

Therefore, it is time to act! For the camels in Birqash and for all animals.

Please do not allow more time to pass. We urge you to take consequent action to stop the violence at Birqash market and help pave the way for animal welfare to become a reality in Egypt.

Yours sincerely

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