

EGYPT'S ANIMALS SHOULD REVOLT AS WELL!



Egyptian TV anchor Mona Khalil, also a leader of the Egyptian animal rights movement, was making her way through a hail of rubber bullets and tear gas during recent demonstrations in Cairo when she saw a sad sight: "I saw cats running, running, running, and trying to get into houses or staircases or buildings and some of them were really gasping." She managed to save two kittens, but countless other animals were killed in the melée. Khalil said it was "the first slap in the face that, oh my God, those streets are filled with cats and dogs."

No animals are safe during violent human disturbances – and it doesn't matter if the cause of the disturbance is just. Animals are left out of the equation; they're neglected, run over, or willfully killed whenever a mob scene occurs.

Although world news has focussed attention on the freedom fight in Cairo, little has been said about the suffering

of the capital's pets and working animals. They have been left to fend for themselves as tourists and locals have fled danger. Zoo and pet shop animals have sometimes been left to starve. As Treasurer of The Egyptian Society for Mercy to Animals (ESMA), Khalil said, "It's very common to see stray cats and dogs on the street, but not for us to see [abandoned] Persians and Siamese."

Kristen Stilt, of ESMA, says of Egyptians, "They want a better future for their country, and they think that just like in [other] countries, animal welfare is an important issue." ESMA was founded in 2007 in response to the government's policy of shooting stray dogs as a method of population control. Islamic law calls for protection of animals, but, "It has become normal to see young boys running after a small dog or pitiful cat and throwing rocks at the poor creature, or tying up the puppy and dragging him by the rope." Likewise, emaciated donkeys, mules, or horses are forced to pull terribly overloaded carts, and beaten mercilessly. To learn more about Egypt's animals, visit: <http://www.esmaegypt.org/>

Author Gwen Cooper: "A couple of people have asked me why they should care about animals all the way in Egypt. My response has been to say that animals aren't citizens of countries. They're citizens of our hearts, and our hearts have no borders."

<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2048792,00.html?hpt=T1>