

China Halts Dog Cull After International Uproar

Crackdown, begun in October, included confiscating all dogs over a certain height.

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Facing increasing pressure from animal lovers worldwide, including from within China itself, an anti-dog crackdown in Beijing has been reportedly stopped by the Chinese government.

The South China Morning Post newspaper reported Dec. 21 that President Hu Jintao “was unhappy about the complaints and international media coverage” of the crackdown and put a stop to it.

The crackdown started in Beijing at the end of October as an attempt to control rabies. It involved confiscating dogs that were either unlicensed or over 35 centimeters – roughly 14 inches – tall.

In response, animal welfare groups organized letter-writing campaigns to various Beijing authorities, including the police department, mayor’s office and Olympic Organizing Committee. Beijing will host the 2008 summer Olympics. International bodies based outside China were contacted as well, including Chinese embassies and the Switzerland-based International Olympic Committee.

The mass of letters, which came from around the world, including one letter signed by 60,000 animal lovers from across China, is credited with creating the pressure for police to stop the crackdown.

The end of the cull “shows that the President understands the special bond people feel with their companion animals and that crackdowns targeting dogs is counterproductive to achieving societal harmony,” said Grace Ge Gabriel, Asia director of the International Fund for Animal Welfare, one of the organizations that had led the letter-writing campaign.

Animal welfare groups are now urging Beijing police to return the owned dogs to their rightful homes.