



Sahabat Alam Malaysia
Friends of the Earth Malaysia
For Environmental Justice

1, Jalan Joki, 11400 Penang, Malaysia
Tel No: +604 827 6930
Fax No: +604 827 6932
Email: foemalaysia@gmail.com
<https://www.foe-malaysia.org>

Letter to Editor

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Ban using Wildlife in all Human Related Activities

Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) is sickened to the core to learn of yet another tragic death of a magnificent animal – the jaguar – at the hands of a military. The needless deaths of the jaguar, gorilla Harambe, alligator killing in Disney resort in Orlando, Florida lions in Chile zoo and countless other exploited wild animals have sparked an international outrage, yet exploitation of wild animals go on.

SAM condemns the incident following the lethal shooting of a jaguar urging for a ban on the showcasing of semi-domesticated animals whether to glorify the military, the Olympics, use in adverts or any human activity.

What kind of values is the Olympic committee trying to portray. Is their display of such an elegant and graceful animal a show of power and dominance over a lesser creature? To drug a beautiful animal, have it on chains and displayed like a trophy without any regard of what wild animals may be capable of doing is unthinkable.

An awesome and powerful animal has lost its life because humans decided that it should be kept in captivity and later paraded in front of the spectators for exhibition and entertainment of the crowd. It is human stupidity and ignorance that led to this unfortunate shooting. And some numbskulls think that jaguars are pets to be contained on a chain, at the same time forgetting that they like all big cats, need to live freely in the wild, roaming over hundreds of square kilometres.

This repulsive trend to make wild cats and other dangerous species into urban pets underscores the appalling ignorance of humans who believe that jaguars can be considered a docile or domesticated animal after having lived among people at a zoo attached to an army training center. Wild animals will always be wild and no wild animal has killer instinct as vigilant as cats.

Wild animals held captive and forced to perform things that are frightening, sometimes painful and unnatural are ticking time bombs putting them at risk through the actions of man.

Another case in point is an advert featuring children's milk product in our local TV channels in which a tiger cub was surrounded by a group of noisy kids. It then showed the cub running away. The advertiser failed to realise that its very action is causing fear and anxiety to that small cub with all the noise coming from the children.

Most saddening is the caging and chaining of wild animals instead of letting them be free and wild. When will the killing, exploitation and mistreatment of animals stop? It is time people and the institutions stop exerting their power and control through the confinement, taming and showcasing of wild animals. Instead of using wild animals as mascots a better option would be to use a symbol of the jaguar, which is just as beautiful, powerful and more compassionate.

It is time humans learn to accept that wild animals need to be left in the wild. Following this lethal shooting of a jaguar – a near threatened species that have already been wiped out in Uruguay and El Salvador, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) – SAM would like to call for an end on the showcasing of wild animals whether in adverts or big events like the Olympic.

S. M. Mohamed Idris
President
Sahabat Alam Malaysia