

dog meat story

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HUMAN SECURITY IN ANIMAL WELFARE: AN ANALYSIS OF HEALTH SECURITY ISSUE IN DOG MEAT TRADE IN INDONESIA

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Alessandro Kurniawan Ulung
Universitas Satya Negara Indonesia, Indonesia
e-mail: a.kurniawan.ulung@usni.ac.id

Abstract

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This study seeks to examine how health security concerns are leveraged to save dogs from the dog meat trade in Indonesia. The consumption of dog meat still persists in certain cities in Indonesia. Efforts to stop this practice remain difficult due to various factors, such as entrenched traditional customs, widespread misconceptions about the health benefits of consuming dog meat, and economic dependencies of many people on this trade for their livelihood. Despite these challenges, a growing number of regional governments have started imposing bans on the dog meat trade to curb dog meat consumption. To date, at least 80 cities, regencies, and provinces across Indonesia have launched bans on this trade. This progress leads to this research question: "Why have more regional governments chosen to ban the dog meat trade?" To answer this question, the study uses a qualitative method, combining interviews and literature reviews for data collection, with human security theory in place. The study finds that the increasing number of local bans is largely driven by health security concerns raised by the Dog Meat Free Indonesia (DMFI) coalition. DMFI emphasized the health security risks related to the dog meat trade, particularly the threat of rabies, to raise awareness and pressure local authorities into adopting regulatory bans. These bans aim to protect communities from the dangers associated with rabies transmission linked to dog meat consumption.

Keywords: ban, regional government, insecurity, rabies, consumption

INTRODUCTION

In Asia, dog meat consumption has been prohibited in Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the Philippines (Czajkowski, 2014, p. 30). However, it remains common in some countries, such as China, Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam. Indonesia shares a similar pattern, where dog meat consumption persists, with less than seven per cent of the total population partaking in it. Every year, millions of dogs are captured and transported throughout Indonesian cities to meet demand. Many of these dogs are either stolen pets or stray animals from urban and rural areas. In Surakarta, Central Java, for example, between 85 and 90 dogs were slaughtered daily in 2019 for local eateries (Anugrahanto, 2022). In Tomohon, North

Sulawesi, dog slaughtering occurs publicly, including at the infamous Tomohon extreme meat market. This animal cruelty against dogs has enraged animal rights activists across the world. They call on the Indonesian government to ban the dog meat trade and consumption, urging them to follow in the footsteps of other countries outlawing the eating of dog meat, such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and the Philippines.

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It remains a challenge to nationally ban the distribution and consumption of dog meats in Indonesia. This is largely due to two major factors: traditional customs and misunderstandings about the health benefits attributed to consuming dog meat. However, regional governments have

begun to recognize the seriousness of this issue, resulting in an increasing number of local bans. As of December 2024, at least 80 cities and regencies have implemented prohibitions on the dog meat trade. Among them is Tomohon. The Tomohon administration banned the dog meat trade in 2023, aiming to stop cruelty and increase public awareness about rabies and other health risks associated with dog meat consumption. Therefore, this study poses this research question: "Why have more regional governments decided to ban the dog meat trade?"

This study found that more regional governments decided to ban the dog meat trade due to health security issue raised by the Dog Meat Free Indonesia (DMFI) coalition. DMFI raised health security concern to increase awareness about the risks of rabies linked to the dog meat trade, urging the local governments to enact regulatory bans to protect people from rabies. As a non-state actor, DMFI stands on the front line of raising the human security concern in the cruel dog meat trade in Indonesia, exposing rabies as threats to public health security, with the goal of ending the dog meat trade in the country.

This study highlights growing city-level awareness of the rabies dangers from the dog meat trade, leading to regulations banning it. Their awareness largely stems from human security concern raised by DMFI. DMFI used the risk of spreading rabies to frame dog meat consumption as a threat to human security. Through this framing, the coalition urged the governments to create policies to halt consumption and trade, raising local government awareness about the cruelty and health risks, culminating in bans via regional regulations.

To elaborate this finding, this study divides the discussion section into three parts. First,

it discusses the theory of human security. Second, it uses the theory to explain how DMFI raised human security issue to call for regional regulations to end animal cruelty. Third, it describes the regional regulations, explaining their connection to human security.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative method to explore how the Dog Meat Free Indonesia (DMFI) coalition raised human security issue to stop the consumption and distribution of dog meat in Indonesia. This method allows this study to gain a deep understanding of not only DMFI's perspectives and values regarding the dog meat trade and consumption but also how the coalition has framed human security concerns to protect and save dogs throughout this archipelago.

According to Monique Hennink et al., p. (2020, p. 57), a qualitative method this method helps researchers identify issues, interpret events and objects, and understand the behaviors and perspectives of study participants. Therefore, researchers need to listen to their narratives. The qualitative method requires researchers to be curious, emphatic, and open-minded. Those characteristics will help them understand how the economic, social, cultural, and physical context of lives shape the behavior and experience of people (Hennink et al., 2020, p. 58).

Applying this qualitative method, I carried out interviews and an intensive literature review. I reviewed books, news reports, journal articles, and other publications about the coalition's actions. I interviewed Dog Meat Free Indonesia (DMFI) coordinator Merry Fernandez, Jakarta Animal Aid Network (JAAN) legal & advocacy manager Adrian Hane, Animal Friends Jogja (AFJ) program manager Elsa Lailatul Marfu'ah, DMFI legal team

member Raga Bintang Muhammad, and animal welfare advocate Wiwiek Bagja. I also talked to lawmaker Francine Widjojo from Jakarta City Council and animal welfare coordinator Hastho Yuliyanto from Directorate of Veterinary Public Health at Ministry of Agriculture. The interviews took place during the 3rd Animal Welfare Conference-Indonesia International Conference on Dec. 6 to Dec. 7, 2024 in Jakarta. This event offered a valuable opportunity to meet and engage with public officials as well as activists from DMFI member organizations like JAAN and AFJ. During the conference, I also participated in focus group discussions and conducted in-depth interviews to collect both primary qualitative and quantitative data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study seeks to explain why more regional governments decided to ban the dog meat trade. This research found that the regional governments banned dog meat trade because of human security concerns raised by the Dog Meat Free Indonesia (DMFI). This coalition managed to reframe the dog meat trade as a human security issue, exposing rabies as a threat to human security behind the trade. DMFI actively brought these human security risks to public attention, encouraging community support to pressure local authorities into enacting regional regulations to halt the consumption and distribution of dog meat. DMFI emphasized the dangers of rabies, connecting it to human security threats, thereby increasing awareness among the public and local government officials.

Health Security in Human Security Framework

According to Mahbub ul Haq, human security focuses primarily on the security of individuals and communities rather than on states or nations. He argued that human

security is about safeguarding people's lives and well-being. The true essence of human security is seen in how people's lives are protected. This makes human security different from state security. While state security prioritizes territorial integrity and national sovereignty, human security addresses a broader range of threats including pandemic, poverty, and diseases. Haq emphasized that achieving human security requires development efforts rather than reliance on military power (Bajpai, 2000, p. 11).

Like Haq, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) also emphasizes the importance of people's security within the framework of human security (Ulung, 2024). Security here is understood as ensuring individuals enjoy three fundamental freedoms: freedom from want, freedom from fear, and freedom from indignity. Freedom from indignity means people are able to make their own choices and have their fundamental rights safeguarded. Freedom from fears ensures protection against various types of direct and indirect violence. Freedom from want guarantees access to secure livelihoods, essential needs, a decent quality of life, and improved human welfare (Fuentes-Nieva et al., 2022, p. 35).

Human security aims to shield individuals from dangers, such as crime, hunger, disease, unemployment, social unrest, political oppression, and environmental threats. Therefore, human security has seven key elements: food security, health security, political security, economic security, environmental security, personal security, and community security (Bajpai, 2000, p. 14).

Health security provides individuals with protection from disease and illness as well as ensures their access to healthcare services. Consequently, threats to health

security include the presence of diseases and the unavailability of healthcare facilities. Health security involves the protection of populations from health threats that endanger life, well-being, and productivity. This encompasses preventing and managing infectious disease outbreaks, such as pandemics like Covid-19 and Ebola, ensuring access to essential medical services and medications, protecting against environmental health risks like pollution and climate change, addressing chronic and mental health conditions, and enhancing the resilience and preparedness of health system for emergencies.

Meanwhile, World Health Organization (WHO) defines health security as activities required to reduce the risks and impacts of acute public health events that threaten the health of populations across different geographical areas and international borders. Health security has interconnection with other human security dimensions, such as economic security, food security, and environmental security. For instance, in the realm of environmental security, climate change influences the spread and occurrence of diseases like malaria, posing risks to health security. In terms of food security, poor health can lower agricultural productivity and affect nutrition. In the realm of economic security, illness can lead to loss of income, increased poverty, and higher healthcare costs.

Dog Meat Trade as a Global Health Security Issue

In Asia, some countries like Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Thailand have regarded dog meat consumption as a threat to health security because dogs can transmit zoonotic viral diseases, such as rabies. They perceive the practice as a risk not only to dogs but also to humans, since in Asia, rabies is mainly spread by dogs (Windianingsih et al., 2004). Consequently, these countries

have prohibited the consumption of dog meat. For example, Hong Kong banned it in 1950 (Magramo, 2023), the Philippines followed in 1998 (Podberscek, 2009), Thailand in 2014 (Anadolu Agency, 2014), and Taiwan in 2017 (Phillips, 2017). The latest Asian country to join the group is South Korea, which in January 2024 passed a bill to ban the slaughter of dogs for food. This legislation also prohibits the consumption, distribution, and sale of food products processed or made from dog ingredients (Shin, 2024).

In Asia, at least five countries have prohibited the trade and consumption of dog meat, thanks to animal rights activists. They stand at the forefront of opposing the practice, speaking out loud against it to save dogs from human consumption. In South Korea, for example, the Humane Society International (HSI) has been actively involved for decades in rescuing dogs from South Korean farms and relocating them overseas. In South Korea, about 1,100 dog farms operate for food production, with half a million dogs being raised on these farms (Yeung et al., 2024).

In Asia, it estimated that between 13 to 16 million dogs are consumed annually (Podberscek, 2009, p. 617). Dog meat trade and consumption have ticked the criteria of a global issue. An issue is considered global when it is both impactful and crosses international boundaries, requiring substantial time to address (Winarno, 2011, p. 20).

The dog meat trade cannot be viewed as a domestic matter only because it also has transnational characteristics, as the trafficking of dogs for meat crosses national borders. In Vietnam, for example, dog meat served in restaurants often originates from Thailand. In Thailand, many dogs fell prey to smugglers who steal them and confine them in severely overcrowded cages before

transporting them across the Mekong River to Laos and ultimately to Vietnam. Most dogs served at dinner tables in Vietnam are well-cared-for pets stolen from Thailand (Campbell, 2013). The cruelty involved in the trafficking of dogs has sparked outrage among animal rights advocates globally. Thanks to advancements in technology and communication, activists around the world can collaborate to protest and halt this practice. Globalization has blurred national boundaries, fostering a sense of shared responsibility among activists worldwide to end the dog meat trade and consumption due to its profound impacts.

Globalization has enabled animal rights activists around the world to collaborate in efforts to end the dog meat trade in Indonesia. This global connection allowed animal welfare organizations such as Animal Friends Jogja, Jakarta Animal Aid Network, Change for Animals Foundation, Four Paws, and Humane Society International to come together and establish a coalition called Dog Meat Free Indonesia (DMFI) in 2017. Through this coalition, they highlighted the health security risks associated with the dog meat trade in Indonesia, urging the Indonesian government to impose a ban. To amplify their message, the coalition enlisted international public figures like Oscar-winning actress Charlize Theron and British comedian Ricky Gervais to help raise awareness and mobilize global pressure on the government to implement the ban for the protection of both animal and human welfare.

The consumption of dog meat in Indonesia has galvanized animal rights activists worldwide to unite in efforts to end the practice. Dogs are often kidnapped, subjected to brutal torture, and slaughtered, after which their meat is cooked and served in various eateries. These establishments are primarily located in certain cities and

provinces in Indonesia, especially Jakarta and Central Java. Investigations by Dog Meat Free Indonesia (DMFI) revealed that about 90% of dogs slaughtered for human consumption in Central Java are sourced from cities in West Java, including Cianjur, Pangandaran, Sukabumi, Garut, and Tasikmalaya. DMFI also uncovered that approximately 13,700 dogs are trafficked into Central Java every month. This live dog smuggling causes a public health risk for the people of Central Java, as West Java is not free of rabies, thereby increasing the risk of rabies infection (Animal Welfare Indonesia, 2023).

In Jakarta, approximately 340 dogs are slaughtered daily for consumption, with two major dog suppliers located in Cawang and Cibubur areas of East Jakarta. The supplier in Cibubur sources dogs from West Java. Meanwhile, the Cawang supplier obtains dogs not only from West Java but also from other regions like Bali. The demand for dog meat comes from various customers, including Korean restaurants, which receive between 8 to 15 kilograms of dog meat weekly from the Cawang supplier (Animal Welfare Indonesia, 2023).

In West Java, a key supply center is Sukabumi. This city acts as a source hub for dogs destined for regions with high dog meat demand. Thousands of dogs are captured and stolen monthly from streets and rural areas of Sukabumi. These dogs are then transported alive to destinations including Jakarta, East Java, and Central Java, such as Surakarta. Transportation methods often involve trucks covered with tarpaulins or motorbikes carrying dogs in hessian sacks with their mouths bound shut. Investigations by DMFI in 2019 estimated that around 13,700 dogs are stolen and captured each month from cities across Java. Many of these dogs are transported to slaughterhouses in Surakarta, where they

supply about 82 restaurants that serve dog meat (Four Paws, 2020, p. 35).

Like Surakarta, North Sulawesi is also infamous for its dog meat consumption practices within the province. Notorious markets in this region, such as Tomohon and Langowan, are sites of extreme animal cruelty. Each week, tens of thousands of animals—including dogs—are traded and slaughtered through brutal methods involving bludgeoning and blowtorching. These markets openly display the savage slaughtering in front of other animals awaiting their turn. Dogs and other animals suffer strikes to the head with sticks followed by being torched alive until death (Four Paws, 2020, p. 36).

Investigations by DMFI identified that tens of thousands of dogs are illegally brought into North Sulawesi each month to supply over 200 traditional markets in the province, including the Tomohon market. A major sourcing point is Makassar, the capital of South Sulawesi. From Makassar, dogs endure a long and arduous journey of over 17,000 kilometers lasting more than 40 hours. They are transported illegally without food, water, or rest and cross four provincial borders. South Sulawesi's traditional markets, where public dog slaughter occurs weekly, attract not only locals but also tourists. Despite the evident animal cruelty, local authorities and tour operators promote these markets as a "must-see attraction" (Four Paws, 2020, p. 36).

In Balikpapan, East Kalimantan, it is estimated that between 200 and 300 dogs are slaughtered each month for human consumption, based on an investigation by DMFI conducted from December 2020 to March 2021. The coalition found that the city has over 15 restaurants openly selling dog meat. Annually, DMFI disclosed that around 2,000 to 3,000 dogs are sourced, killed, and sold in Balikpapan. The dog

meat trade here largely relies on stolen pets and stray dogs. Most of the stolen dogs are brought in from neighboring districts and cities. However, some restaurants reportedly breed and keep dogs specifically for slaughter and sale (Four Paws, 2021, p. 3).

Dog thieves tend to target healthy-looking dogs to fetch higher prices, which is why they often steal pets, causing distress and fear among owners. These captures usually occur outside urban areas, within about 50 km of Balikpapan. The methods of capturing and transporting dogs are cruel and brutal: they are often beaten over the head to subdue them. It is also common for dogs to be poisoned with substances like potassium cyanide or strychnine, or shot with arrows and other weapons. These harsh methods cause injuries including wounds and broken bones. After capture, dogs are often stuffed into sacks and transported on motorbikes at night or early morning to slaughterhouses, with their mouths tightly bound to evade detection (Four Paws, 2021, p. 3).

Balikpapan has two dog slaughterhouses along with two main distributors who supply dog meat to local restaurants. These distributors provide live or slaughtered dogs based on customer requests. When sold alive, these dogs are typically in a critical state—severely ill, injured, and debilitated—due to the harsh capture and transport conditions. DMFI identified the largest distributor located in a very rural area around 40 km from North Balikpapan. This distributor breeds and slaughters dogs as orders come in. The dogs, whether live or as meat delivered to restaurants in Balikpapan and its southern areas, are often extremely sick, dehydrated, and close to death.

The second distributor is situated at KM 5 in Balikpapan and supplies dog meat to both

the eastern and western parts of the city, slaughtering 2 to 4 dogs daily and selling about 5 kilograms of cooked dog meat each day. A third distributor, also based inside the city, slaughters dogs and provides raw dog meat for sale (Four Paws, 2021, p. 4).

DMFI's investigation uncovered that 15 restaurants in Balikpapan openly sell dog meat. These establishments not only have clear signage but also actively advertise dog meat products. The coalition suspects there are more such restaurants operating secretly. Most restaurants rely on suppliers for their dog meat, with only a few reportedly slaughtering dogs on-site. On average, these restaurants sell around 5 kilograms of dog meat daily, both in-store and online.

Restaurants purchase raw dog meat from distributors at prices ranging from Rp 30,000 to 50,000 per kilogram, while live dogs cost between Rp 350,000 and 800,000 each. By selling a dog meat dish weighing 250 to 300 grams at prices between Rp 25,000 to 38,000, restaurants can earn a net profit of approximately Rp 250,000 to 500,000 daily (Four Paws, 2021, p. 5).

DMFI's Advocacy for Health Security in Indonesia

Since its establishment in 2017, the Dog Meat Free Indonesia (DMFI) coalition has been at the forefront of highlighting health security concerns related to the dog meat trade and consumption in Indonesia. The coalition's goal is to protect dogs from being consumed by humans in the country. DMFI frames the dog meat trade as a significant threat to health security due to its association with rabies risks. The consumption of dog meat endangers both dogs and human health, as it increases the risk of humans contracting rabies.

To advocate for health security, DMFI employed two main strategies: campaigns and negotiations. The coalition not only conducted online and offline campaigns, but also meet the government officials to lobby for the launch of ban on dog meat trade at regional and national levels.

In raising the health security issue, DMFI targets both the public and governments as the audience. The coalition raises awareness about the dangers of dog meat consumption and trade to human health security and encourages public support to pressure local governments to implement bans on the dog meat trade.

DMFI has organized both online and offline campaigns to oppose dog meat consumption and trade. On their website, www.dogmeatfreeindonesia.org, DMFI advocate for a national ban on the dog meat trade, urging President Joko Widodo to take decisive action:

"I urge you [President Joko Widodo], on behalf of all dogs and the vast majority (93%) of the Indonesian population who never consumes dog meat, to please take action to safeguard Indonesia's dogs from cruelty and the nation's health by ending the cruel and illegal dog meat trade."

The coalition used the campaigns not only to protest but also to raise public awareness about the threats posed by dog meat trade. It prompted the government to take emergency actions to stop the cruelty to end the threat to human and animal welfare.

The official launch of The Dog Meat Free Indonesia campaign took place on November 2, 2017. During the launch, DMFI released their investigative findings, debuted a campaign film, and introduced an online petition. The coalition encouraged the public to support the campaign by signing the petition on their website. DMFI

also promoted the petition widely through social media channels, such as Facebook and Instagram to maximize awareness (Dog Meat Free Indonesia, 2017b). This online petition became a key tool for DMFI to bring health security concern to the forefront as they called for the cessation of the dog meat trade. Through this petition, DMFI effectively framed the issue of dog meat trade and consumption as a critical matter of health security.

Dog Meat Free Indonesia (DMFI) was officially established in 2017. However, various animal rights organizations had been investigating the dog meat trade across Indonesia independently since 2012. These groups came together in 2017 to form DMFI after realizing that working alone would make it very difficult to halt the trade. According to Ferdinandez, collaboration was crucial because the larger the coalition, the more pressure they could collectively exert on the government to enforce a ban on the dog meat trade (Ferdinandez, interview, Dec. 6, 2024).

In presenting the health security threats posed by the dog meat trade, Dog Meat Free Indonesia (DMFI) provided the government with samples of the rabies virus found in dog meat during their investigation (Ferdinandez, interview, Dec. 6, 2024). These samples were given as proof that dog meat consumption can lead to rabies infection. In Asia, dogs are the primary transmitters of rabies (Windiyarningsih et al., 2004, p. 1389).

In Indonesia, from January to July 2024, there were 71 reported deaths due to rabies, including 27 in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). During the same period, East Nusa Tenggara recorded 16,180 cases of probable animal bites. Indonesia has 26 provinces endemic for rabies, with East Nusa Tenggara being the most affected. In 2023, this province reported 35 rabies-related

deaths from 19,320 cases of possible animal bites (Backhouse, 2024).

Some scholars have examined the risks posed by rabies in Indonesia. For instance, Caecilia Windiyarningsih conducted a study on a rabies outbreak in Flores, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), where dog meat consumption is permitted. This epidemic occurred between 1998 and 2003 and resulted in the deaths of 113 people during that time. In response, local authorities initiated a mass culling of dogs to halt the spread of infectious diseases transmitted through dog meat. From 1998 to 2001, authorities killed a total of 295,569 dogs (Windiyarningsih et al., 2004, p. 1390).

However, the massive dog culling in Flores was ultimately unsuccessful in fully stopping the transmission of the rabies virus (Windiyarningsih et al., 2004, p. 1393). Windiyarningsih also identified that the rabies outbreak originated from three infected dogs brought from Buton Island in Southeast Sulawesi to Flores. Since the rabies infection initially went undetected, other dogs in Flores became infected, leading to the fatalities. The first confirmed case of rabies in East Flores was recorded in September 1997 (Windiyarningsih et al., 2004, p. 1390).

In 2008, Bali experienced a rabies outbreak that resulted in 169 human deaths in the province (Naipospos, 2018). It is believed that the rabies virus was introduced to Bali through rabies-infected dogs brought by fishermen traveling from Sulawesi. These fishermen reportedly took the dogs on board as food, as some tribes in Sulawesi consume dog meat. However, they were unaware that the dogs were carriers of rabies. The virus subsequently spread across the island through dog bites. Traditionally, the Balinese population does not consume dog meat, and dog meat consumption in Bali is thought to have been introduced by the

Sulawesi people (Mahardika et al., 2014, p. 1152).

The rabies outbreaks in both Bali and Flores illustrate that dogs are carriers of the rabies virus and thus are unsafe for consumption due to the risk of transmission and resulting fatalities. Despite this, dog meat consumption continues in Indonesia. Dogs are often kidnapped, subjected to cruelty, slaughtered, and then served in eateries, particularly in cities like Jakarta and provinces such as Central Java. According to investigations by Dog Meat Free Indonesia (DMFI), around 90% of dogs killed for meat in Central Java are sourced from West Java cities, including Cianjur, Pangandaran, Sukabumi, Garut, and Tasikmalaya. DMFI found that approximately 13,700 dogs are smuggled monthly to Central Java, a practice that puts residents at risk of rabies infection since West Java is not a rabies-free zone (Animal Welfare Indonesia, 2023).

In its online campaign, Dog Meat Free Indonesia (DMFI) revealed findings from their investigations through videos documenting the entire process—from the capture of dogs to their transportation and slaughter for the dog meat trade. These videos expose the extreme cruelty endured by the dogs. Dog meat traders violently seize the dogs, then pack them tightly into cages and sacks. The dogs suffer intensely from heat and pain during the long, harsh journeys to the markets. Their mouths are bound so tightly that breathing becomes difficult. Upon arrival at slaughterhouses, the dogs are brutally killed (Dog Meat Free Indonesia, 2017a).

By December 2024, over 1,155,955 people had signed an online petition supporting DMFI's efforts. Through this petition, the signatories made a strong appeal for a nationwide ban on the dog meat trade in Indonesia. In their call, they urged President

Joko Widodo to implement the ban, emphasizing the public health threat posed by the potential spread of rabies linked to the dog meat trade. DMFI demands that the president end this cruel industry to protect dogs from suffering and safeguard the majority of Indonesians from dog meat-related infectious diseases.

Dog Meat Free Indonesia (DMFI) also organizes rallies in various cities, performing public speech on the streets to advocate for the end of dog meat trade and consumption. They gather in public spaces to attract the attention of media outlets, with the goal of having news agencies cover the events to raise public awareness about the issue (Ferdinandez, interview, Dec. 6, 2024).

The inaugural rally took place in Surabaya, East Java, on December 10, 2017. Here, petition supporters marched through the streets to increase political awareness about the suffering of tens of thousands of dogs slaughtered for meat in Indonesia. The rally was coordinated by eight local pro-animal welfare organizations, including Surabaya Save Paws, Surabaya Dog Lovers, and Loving Dog's Community. Participants carried posters and flags bearing slogans such as "Stop Eating Dog Meat Now" and "Be Part of Our Campaign and Together Let's End this Cruelty." (Dog Meat Free Indonesia, 2017b).

In the wake of the Surabaya march, demonstrations spread to other cities. In February 2018, hundreds of individuals rallied over two days across five major cities—Surabaya, Surakarta, Bandung, Yogyakarta, and Jakarta—demanding an end to cruelty against dogs. These protests later extended to additional cities known for dog meat trade, such as Malang, Semarang, and Manado. By November 2018, hundreds gathered in these locations to press local governments to outlaw the dog meat trade

and shut down eateries serving dog meat dishes. These rallies served as medium to emphasize the urgent need to stop animal cruelty, with demonstrators carrying flags, banners, and posters bearing messages like "Dogs are Not Food," "Dogs are Our Friends," and "Dogs Deserve Better" (Dog Meat Free Indonesia, 2018c).

In addition to public rallies, DMFI has engaged in formal advocacy by raising public awareness and calling for regulated bans during meetings with government officials. For instance, in February 2018, Karin Franken, DMFI's national coordinator, met with Sri Hartati, head of the animal health division at Jakarta's Agriculture and Marine Agency, to heighten Jakarta's government awareness and demand immediate action to halt animal cruelty. During the discussion, Franken highlighted the widespread transport of captured dogs across Java for consumption. She used this opportunity to urge Jakarta's officials to recognize the severe health risks posed by the dog meat trade, especially the potential spread of rabies virus to humans (DMFI (@dogmeatfreeindonesia), 2018).

Dog Meat Free Indonesia (DMFI) continued its advocacy efforts during the National Coordination of Animal Welfare meeting held on August 1st and 2nd, 2018, where they met with Syamsul Ma'arif, the director of Veterinary Public Health at the Ministry of Agriculture. At this meeting, DMFI leveraged its extensive nationwide investigation revealing the suffering of dogs in the dog meat trade to emphasize the urgency of the issue, pushing for a formal government commitment to ban the trade across the nation. DMFI coordinator Merry Fernandez stated, "It will be hard to realize Indonesia's pledge to be rabies-free in 2020 unless we execute a regulation to stop the dog meat trade soon" (Dog Meat Free Indonesia, 2018a). She delivered this message to representatives from livestock

and animal health departments, as well as animal quarantine agencies from all Indonesian provinces.

Similarly, DMFI coordinator Lola Webber, co-founder of the Change for Animals Foundation, urged the central government to take decisive and immediate measures to ban the dog meat trade. In her speech, she detailed the cruel realities faced by dogs in the trade:

"Our investigations have revealed that each month tens of thousands of dogs are being slaughtered to supply Indonesia's dog meat trade. Markets and slaughterhouses resemble scenes from a horror movie. This is the grim reality for dogs caught in Indonesia's dog meat trade. They are confined in tiny cages or burlap sacks with their mouths tightly bound, barely able to breathe. They watch as other dogs are beaten and burned alive, awaiting their own turn" (Dog Meat Free Indonesia, 2018b).

The coalition pushes the government to ban the dog meat trade not only by revealing findings from its investigations but also by providing the legal grounds that the government should employ to implement the ban, explained Adrian Hane, legal & advocacy manager of Jakarta Animal Aid Network (JAAN), a DMFI member. During meetings with government officials, DMFI presented the legal regulations that dog meat traders violated, using these laws to reinforce their advocacy efforts in persuading the government to prohibit the trade. These include Article 302 of the Criminal Code, Law No. 41 of 2014 on Animal Husbandry and Animal Health, and Government Regulation No. 82 of 2000 on Animal Quarantine. Adrian recalled that during these meetings, DMFI emphasized through their advocacy that the dog meat trade breaches the Criminal Code because it abuses dogs. This trade leads to abuse by inflicting harm and injury on dogs for profit

(Adrian, interview, Dec. 7, 2024). DMFI's advocacy explains that the government must ban the dog meat trade as it constitutes what Article 302 defines as animal abuse — intentionally causing animals prolonged illness, disability, severe injury, or death. DMFI's investigations uncover the extent of these abuses within the dog meat trade (Adrian, interview, Dec. 7, 2024).

For animal welfare advocate Wiwiek Bagja, enforcing these laws is crucial to ensuring domestic animals receive the "five freedoms" as outlined by the World Organization for Animal Health: freedom from thirst, hunger, and malnutrition; freedom from discomfort; freedom from pain, injury, and disease; freedom to express normal behavior; and freedom from fear and distress. DMFI incorporated these five freedoms within their advocacy efforts during negotiations with local governments (Bagja, interview, Dec. 6, 2024).

On June 17, 2019, DMFI met with Juliyatmono, the regent of Karanganyar, to highlight the widespread dog meat trade issue in Central Java. In this advocacy, the coalition framed the issue as a security threat, providing the regent with an investigative report detailing the cruelty inflicted on tens of thousands of dogs each month in Central Java, including Karanganyar. They also presented the necessary regional regulations the regent needed to enact to protect domestic animals and safeguard people from the risk of rabies infection.

Following its meeting in Karanganyar, DMFI proceeded to Sukoharjo on July 25, 2019, where it convened with Widodo, the second assistant to the regional secretary, alongside officials from multiple agencies including agriculture and fishery, trade and small and medium enterprises, public order, and local police. This meeting enabled the coalition to advocate for urgent actions that

the local government needed to implement to immediately halt the dog meat trade in Sukoharjo.

DMFI then escalated its advocacy to the provincial level by meeting Central Java Governor Ganjar Pranowo on December 3, 2019. In this session, DMFI presented its investigative findings, highlighting the severity of the dog meat trade, which causes the death of thousands of dogs each month within the province, calling for the governor's commitment to put an end to this cruel practice.

After securing Ganjar Pranowo's pledge to combat the dog meat trade in Central Java, DMFI focused its efforts on the city of Surakarta, identified as the epicenter of this cruel trade in the region. Investigations by the coalition revealed there were at least 80 eateries selling dog meat dishes in Surakarta, with an estimated 85 to 90 dogs slaughtered daily in the city. Many of these dogs were sourced from West Java. To intensify the issue, DMFI sent formal letters to city authorities, organized demonstrations at the city hall, and sought an audience with Surakarta's mayor.

On September 21, 2022, DMFI coordinator Mustika met with Surakarta Mayor Gibran Rakabumingraka, urging him during this meeting to ban the dog meat trade and to close eateries serving dog meat across the city. This call was grounded in concerns for public health and violations of animal welfare. Mustika emphasized that the dog meat trade posed significant threats to public safety in Surakarta due to the risks of rabies associated with consuming dog meat (Anugrahanto, 2022).

Merry Fernandez from Dog Meat Free Indonesia (DMFI) disclosed that the coalition encountered difficulties when trying to persuade local governments to view the dog meat trade as a threat to human

security. For instance, in Surakarta, the city government argued that many people relied on the dog meat trade for their livelihoods. Consequently, the Surakarta administration stated it could not compel its residents to cease this business since alternative employment opportunities were lacking (Ferdinandez, interview, Dec. 6, 2024).

Similarly, Yogyakarta showed resistance for the same reasons. According to Animal Friends Jogja (AFJ), a DMFI member, the local administration in Yogyakarta ignored the coalition's investigations into the dog meat trade within the province. Elsa Lailatul Marfu'ah, AFJ's program manager, remarked that the Yogyakarta government lacked the political will to ban the trade. Although officials, when confronted with the coalition's investigative reports, acknowledged the risks and promised to implement a ban, the prohibition has yet to be enacted due to this lack of political commitment. Hence, DMFI continues to persistently push the Yogyakarta government to outlaw the trade through ongoing advocacy and campaigns (Marfu'ah, interview, Dec. 6, 2024).

The Effect of DMFI's Advocacy for Health Security

Health security issue raised by Dog Meat Free Indonesia (DMFI) in their campaigns and lobbies has resulted in the launch of bans in at least 80 cities, regencies, and provinces. This demonstrates the effectiveness of health security concern that the coalition has raised. Local governments have recognized the threats highlighted in DMFI's narratives by legislating prohibitions against the trade to mitigate those risks. Such bans exist in places like Karanganyar, Sukoharjo, and Salatiga, primarily aiming to protect dogs from cruelty and safeguard humans from the dangers of rabies.

Karanganyar was the pioneer regency to enact such a ban. In September 2019, Regent Juliyatmono introduced Regulation No. 74/2019, which focuses on monitoring veterinary public health in slaughterhouses and the sale of animal meat products. This regulation applies veterinary science principles to prevent zoonotic diseases, including rabies, thereby aiming to protect human health. Specifically, Article 9 of the regulation prohibits any individual or entity from circulating or distributing non-food meat intended for consumption—the term "non-food meat" referring to dog meat (Juliyatmono, 2019).

This local regulation was grounded in the earlier Circular No. 9874/2018 issued by I Ketut Diarmita, the Director General of Animal Health and Husbandry at the Ministry of Agriculture, dated September 25, 2018. The circular called on local governments to intensify their surveillance of the dog meat trade and distribution. It classified dog meat as a non-food product and directed local animal health and husbandry agencies throughout Indonesia to ban the trade and distribution of dog meat, while also increasing public awareness about the zoonotic disease risks linked to its consumption. The central government reinforced the need for stricter oversight of dog meat trade and distribution jurisdictions (Diarmita, 2018).

Juliyatmono's initiative spurred other cities in Central Java to follow Karanganyar's lead, including Wonogiri, Sukoharjo, and Salatiga. For instance, in October 2020, Sukoharjo's Regent Wardoyo Wijaya enacted Regulation No. 5/2020 concerning the management of street vendors, with Article 34 explicitly banning the trade of non-food meat for consumption. Article 41 of the regulation outlines various penalties for violators, ranging from warning letters and business permit revocation to the demolition of food stalls selling illegal meat

(Wijaya, 2020). By November 2021, the regent actively enforced the ban by rescuing 53 dogs smuggled in a truck, who were cruelly confined with mouths bound (Ewe, 2021). The smuggler, Guruh Tri Susilo, was sentenced in April 2022 to 1.5 years imprisonment and fined Rp 150 million (Isnanto, 2022). Earlier, another smuggler, Suradi, received a 10-month jail term and a similar fine in October 2021 for transporting 78 dogs from West Java to Surakarta for consumption (Dewantara, 2021). Suradi's conviction marked Indonesia's first legal punishment of dog meat traders under animal health and food safety laws, representing a milestone in the global movement protecting dogs from trade and human consumption.

In 2021, Salatiga's Mayor Yuliyanto issued Circular No. 510/2021, banning the trade and distribution of dog meat by emphasizing that dogs are not livestock and dog meat is not food. The circular aimed to prevent zoonotic disease spread and reaffirmed the commitment to enforce the ban and raise public awareness about rabies risks tied to dog meat consumption in Salatiga (Yuliyanto, 2021). Mayor Yuliyanto expressed hopes that this ban would inspire other regions to join the movement to protect dogs and build a wide-scale, collective effort: "By making this ban, we hope that other regions will soon follow so that this can become a comprehensive and massive movement. This cannot be done by the Salatiga government only. Other governments also have a role and society must join this movement too" (DMFI, 2021).

Following Salatiga, Semarang—the capital of Central Java—joined the campaign. On January 27, 2022, Mayor Hendrar Prihadi issued Circular No. 426/2022, making Semarang the first provincial capital to ban the dog meat trade. The circular was presented as a preventive measure to protect

society from rabies risks. Mayor Hendrar pledged strict enforcement and penalties for offenders, aiming to end the cruelty dogs suffer for the trade (Pemerintah Kota Semarang, 2022).

Soon after, Medan became the first city in Sumatra to enact a similar ban in April 2022. Mayor Bobby Nasution issued Circular No. 440/2022, asserting the city's commitment to enforce the ban, strengthen trade supervision, and educate the public about the zoonotic disease danger linked to dog meat consumption (Asih, 2022).

Central Java was the pioneer province in Indonesia to urge all its cities and regencies to impose a ban on the dog meat trade. In July 2022, the Central Java Animal Husbandry and Health Agency released Circular No. 524.3/2022, which called on all 35 regencies and cities within the province to prohibit the dog meat trade. In this circular, Agus Wuriyanto, the head of the agency, emphasized the need for official written bans at the local level, tighter controls on issuing veterinary health certificates for dogs, and increased efforts to raise public awareness about the health risks posed by consuming dog meat (Saputra, 2022). Following Central Java's example, West Java joined the movement in October 2023. The province's Food Security and Livestock Agency issued Circular No. 7705, which aimed to ban and halt the trade of dog meat across the province.

CONCLUSION

Intending to halt the dog meat trade and consumption in Indonesia, the Dog Meat Free Indonesia (DMFI) framed the issue as a health security concern. They highlighted the cruelty inherent in the practice and pointed out significant health risks to humans, especially diseases transmitted through dog meat, such as rabies. To raise awareness on this health security threat, the

coalition actively engaged with government bodies and local authorities. They organized rallies, launched online petitions, and utilized social media platforms to educate the public about the dangers associated with the dog meat trade and consumption. DMFI invited the public to join its campaign via social media, urging central and local governments to ban the trade of dog meat. Through these campaigns and lobbies, DMFI successfully persuaded key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Agriculture, two provincial governments, and 43 cities and regencies, to implement bans on the trade. This campaigns and lobbies were championed by both domestic and international animal rights activists. Under the DMFI umbrella, non-state actors united to raise health security concern in the dog meat trade issue, pressuring the Indonesian government to emulate countries like Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the Philippines, which have outlawed the practice. Consequently, the dog meat trade in Indonesia escalated into a global concern, attracting international rights activists advocating for a ban in the country.

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