



CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ANIMAL LAW PROTECTION IN INDONESIA

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Abstract:

In 2022, the Social Media Animal Cruelty Coalition (SMACC) identified Indonesia as the principal jurisdiction of origin for digital content depicting animal cruelty. Among 5,480 documented instances globally, 1,626 (29.7%) were traced to Indonesia. While Indonesia has established a statutory framework for animal protection—encompassing provisions within the Criminal Code (KUH Pidana) and specialized legislation including Law No. 41/2014 (amending Law No. 18/2009 on Livestock and Animal Health)—enforcement efficacy remains substantially compromised by structural, societal, and institutional deficiencies. This empirical study examines implementation challenges within Indonesia's animal protection regime, utilizing survey data from 62 respondents. Key findings indicate: Prevalence of Violations: 60.66% of respondents reported direct exposure to animal abuse cases, while 82.26% witnessed instances of animal neglect.

Awareness-Deficit Disparity: Although 70.97% demonstrated awareness of existing animal protection statutes, 91.94% characterized these regulations as substantively inadequate.

Systemic Implementation Failures: Near-unanimous dissatisfaction was expressed regarding Law enforcement efficacy (98.39%). Public awareness dissemination (100%). Societal engagement (100%).

The analysis applies theoretical frameworks concerning legal efficacy and implementation deficits to evaluate these systemic impediments. Proposed remedial measures encompass statutory enhancement, targeted public education initiatives, and fortified enforcement mechanisms. The study underscores the exigency of comprehensive policy reform to advance animal welfare protections within Indonesia's legal architecture.

Keywords:

Animal protection, animal welfare, animal abuse in Indonesia

1. Introduction

On 2022 animal lovers in Indonesia were shock when a report by the Social Media Animal Cruelty Coalition (SMACC) listed Indonesia as the top source for digital contents involving animal cruelty. Among 5,480 videos displayed globally, the report discovered that between July 2020 and August 2021, 1,626 of animal cruelty, around 30% of total videos displayed, were made in Indonesia. The top 5 animals being abused are birds, dogs and cats, wild boar, reptiles, and primates (SMACC, 2022). Mongabay (Setiabudhi et al., 2023) mentioned that more than a million cats and dogs were killed to be consumed in Indonesia every year, and more than 130,000 dogs and cats were killed and sold for human consumption in Tomohon extrim market in North Sulawesi.

Indonesia has an attraction named “Topeng Monyet,” which translates to monkey mask shows, . The “performers,” which are mostly Macaca monkeys, are mistreated and treated cruelly for the sake of profit. From a very young age, they are badly snatched from the forests, where hunters would kill the mother and sometimes the entire monkey clan

to collect the infant. Nurturing the young primate is not part of the burden, as they are simply abandoned to grow in solitude. Instead, they are subjected to starvation. Nurturing them is not a burden they are subjected to. Instead, they are starved and forced to consume a diet lacking vital calories and nutrients. These primates are cruelly trained, which involves vicious beating and chaining of their necks, to execute simple acts such as performing actions of normal, human behavior.

The Indonesian Agriculture Department is working on a new regulation on animal welfare. Nevertheless, the dissemination of information regarding this new regulation is extremely limited. Only 30.65% of respondents know that the ministry of agriculture is working on a new animal welfare regulation.

The issue of animal welfare is increasingly becoming a concern across the world, representing new social norms and legislation that seeks to protect and prevent suffering and exploitation of animals (Scholarworks & Bittinger, 2023). Furthermore, An intensive animal producer might conclude that welfare is good in a high health confinement system because the animals are healthy and growing well; a critic might draw the opposite conclusion because the animals are crowded together in barren pens and develop abnormal behaviour

In Indonesia, the regulations concerning animal cruelty are distinctly outlined and prohibit any type of animal torture. Although animal cruelty is classified as a crime, it is governed by specific laws, including the Indonesian Criminal Code Article 302, which defines and penalizes animal torture. Article 406(2) addresses property damage, which in this context pertains to owned animals. Article 540(1)-(2) pertains to the neglect and abandonment of animals, as well as their mistreatment. Additionally, there is specialized legislation: Law No. 18 of 2009, which was amended by Law No. 41 of 2014, concerning the Livestock Industry and Animal Health. Government Regulation No. 95 of 2012, Article 66(1)-(2), mandates humane treatment during keeping and transport. Article 67 stipulates that oversight by veterinarians regarding animal welfare is compulsory. Collectively, these laws constitute the foundation of Indonesia's animal protection legislation, which, as highlighted by Makarawung in 2021, faces challenges in enforcement.

Unlike previous studies focused on animal welfare (Setiabudhi et al., 2023) or veterinary medicine (Reimert et al., 2023), this study focuses on perception analysis to explore the enforcement of animal protection laws in Indonesia through a civilian lens to evaluate civic awareness, participation, and enforcement monitoring regarding animal protection laws.

Some studies have been done on the importance of collaboration between the government, enforcement agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the public in advancing animal welfare policy (Stucki, 2023). Yet, some of these works have been done in the context of governance and public policy: low institutional prioritization, insufficient public awareness campaigns, public relations campaigns, or education, and weak consequences for violators (Kotzmann, 2019). This study augments that understanding by looking at animal protection enforcement gaps and addressing these fundamental obstacles by devising strategies to enhance public compliance and civic engagement.

The study intends to accomplish the following objectives: 1. Measure the public's perception and awareness of Indonesia's animal protection laws. 2. Identify gaps within the animal protection enforcement and reporting systems. 3. Formulate policy directives to improve the level of compliance of the community and the enforcement regulators.

2. Materials and Method

This research investigates the implementation of animal protection laws in Indonesia, utilizing survey data collected from 62 participants between June 18 and June 23, 2025. The participants are animal enthusiasts from various animal welfare communities across Indonesia.

We employed a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both open-ended and closed-ended online questionnaires. These questionnaires were distributed via online platforms. The aim is to achieve a thorough understanding of the research subject. The study utilizes 16 structured questionnaires as detailed below:

- a. The occurrence of animal abuse cases – 3 questions (Q1-Q3)
- b. Actions taken by respondents when confronted with cases of animal abuse – 1 question (Q4)
- c. Views on law enforcement – 2 questions (Q5, Q10)
- d. Insights into the reasons for the low enforcement of animal abuse laws in Indonesia – 2 questions (Q5-Q11)
- e. Perception of the police as the initial point of contact for reporting animal abuse – 2 questions (Q14-Q15)
- f. Knowledge of animal protection laws in Indonesia – 4 questions (Q6-Q9)

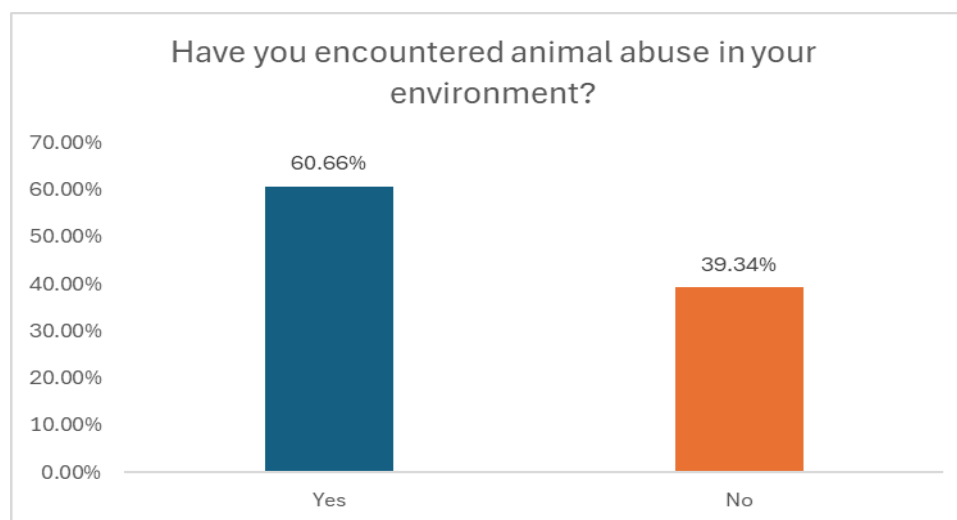
- g. Suggestions from respondents to enhance the enforcement of animal abuse laws in Indonesia – 1 question (Q12)
 h. Awareness of new animal welfare regulations developed by the agriculture department – 1 question (Q13)
 i. Willingness to provide feedback on the new animal welfare regulations – 1 question (Q16)

Table 1. Data respondents

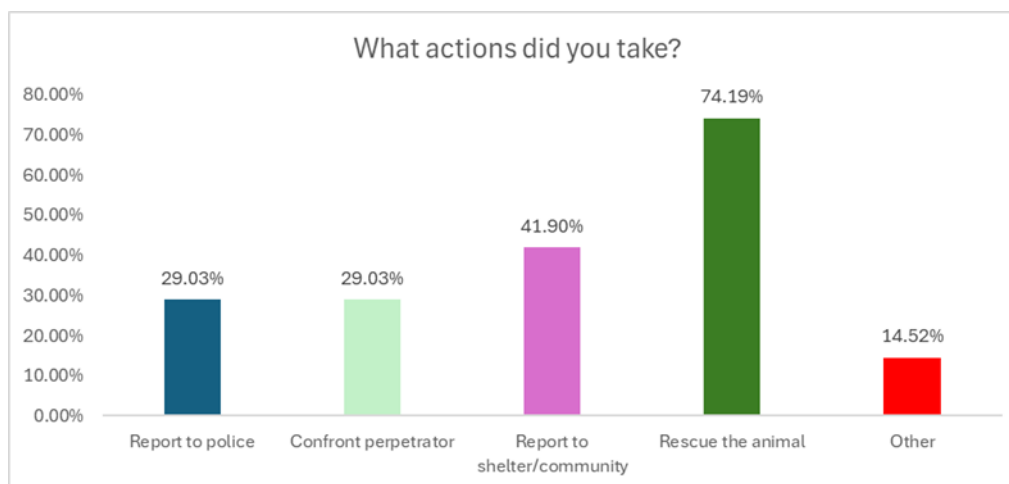
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118893718913	2025-06-23 08:47:45	2025-06-23 08:51:30	103.84.5.79
118893473011	2025-06-22 20:41:23	2025-06-22 20:45:50	180.243.10.86
118893467156	2025-06-22 20:25:59	2025-06-22 20:30:24	182.2.143.139
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3. Results

The results indicate that a significant portion of participants (60.66%) have experienced instances of animal abuse, whereas 82.26% have observed cases of animal neglect. Although 70.97% are informed about the current animal protection legislation, 91.94% feel that these laws are inadequate. Major obstacles consist of insufficient law enforcement (98.39% dissatisfaction), inadequate socialization (100% dissatisfaction), and a general lack of public concern. This research utilizes theories related to legal effectiveness and the gaps in policy implementation to examine these challenges.

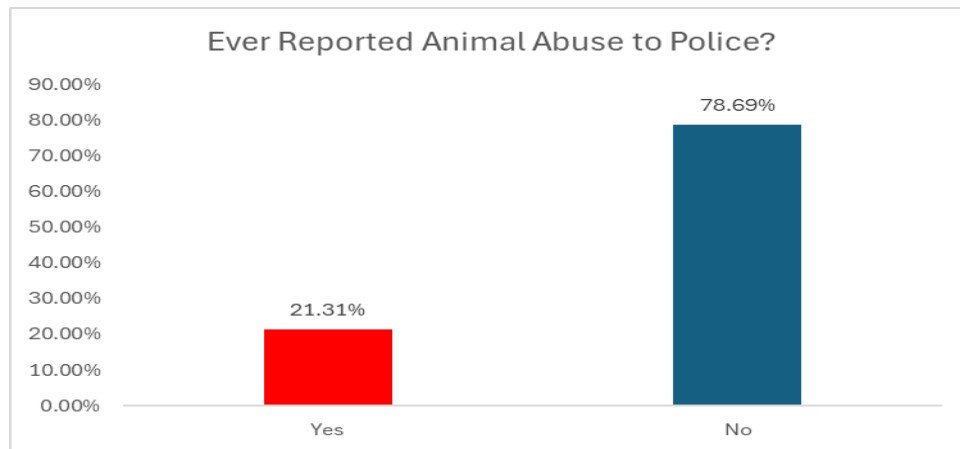


Graph 1. 60.66% of respondents have reported having encountered animal abuse in their surroundings.



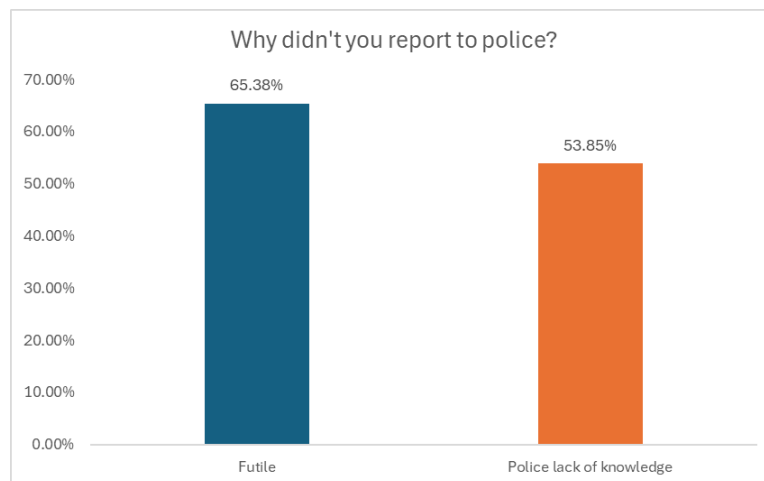
Graph 2. Actions Taken by Respondents

The results indicate that 74.19% of respondents opted to rescue animals in order to circumvent the complicated procedures associated with reporting to the police. In contrast, only 29.03% chose to report to the police, which is even lower than the percentage that opted to report to shelters or animal welfare communities. This demonstrates that the enforcement of animal protection laws in Indonesia is significantly lacking.



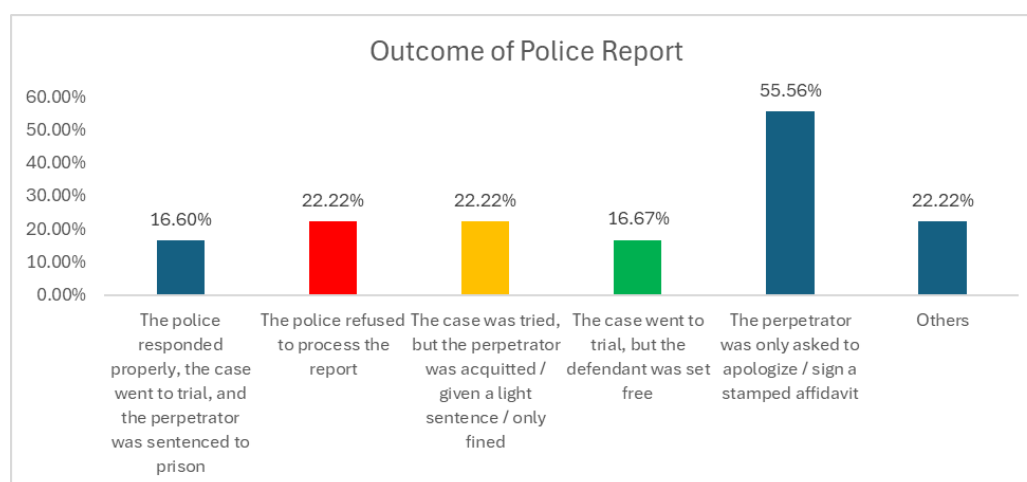
Graph 3. The participants respond to the inquiry regarding whether they have ever reported instances of animal abuse to the authorities.

A significant majority of the participants (78.69%) have not reported animal abuse to the police.



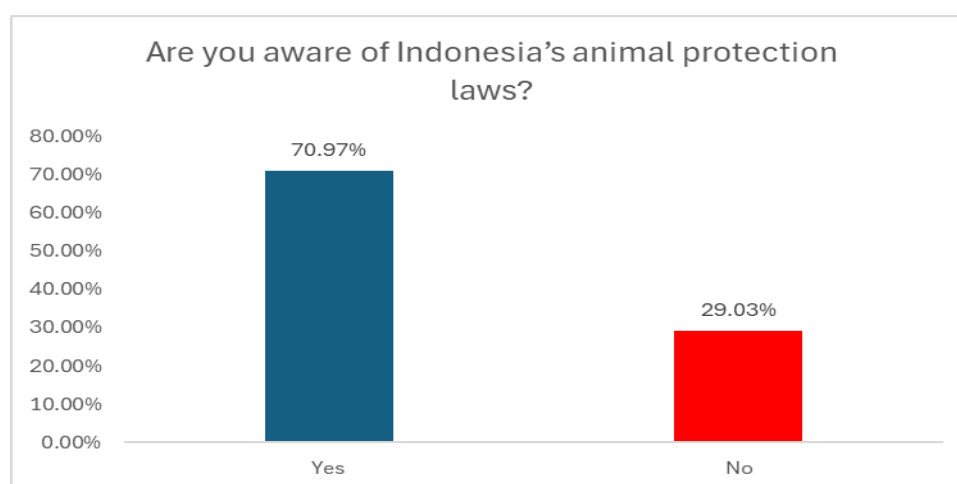
Graph 4. The reasons why respondents were reluctant to report to the police.

It is truly disheartening that the respondents believe reporting to the police is pointless (65.38%), and 53.85% of them feel that the police are indifferent to cases of animal abuse. Some of the comments include: 1. From what I understand, the authorities are only concerned about rabies. They show little regard for animal welfare as long as the animal is not wandering freely. Therefore, even if an animal is chained or caged 24/7 and not properly fed, as long as there is no risk of public disturbance, they remain unconcerned. At most, they may issue a warning. It is exhausting. 2. Reporting is complicated. 3. There is no comprehensive legislation in place, which leaves the police uncertain about which laws to apply. 4. Such cases are deemed unimportant or low-priority, leading to neglect. 5. It varies depending on the circumstances. 6. I fear that the situation may escalate—concerned about potential threats from the perpetrator. Additionally, I question whether the police can genuinely assist. At times, I am unsure where to begin; the procedures and processes appear complex and time-consuming. 7. Legal proceedings are lengthy and demand considerable effort, energy, and financial resources. 10. Occasionally, I worry that the process will be convoluted and not taken seriously. 11. Reporting to the police feels futile. It is merely a waste of time. The legal system struggles to address human cases adequately, let alone those involving animals. 12. I fear being confronted by perpetrators and am concerned about threats.



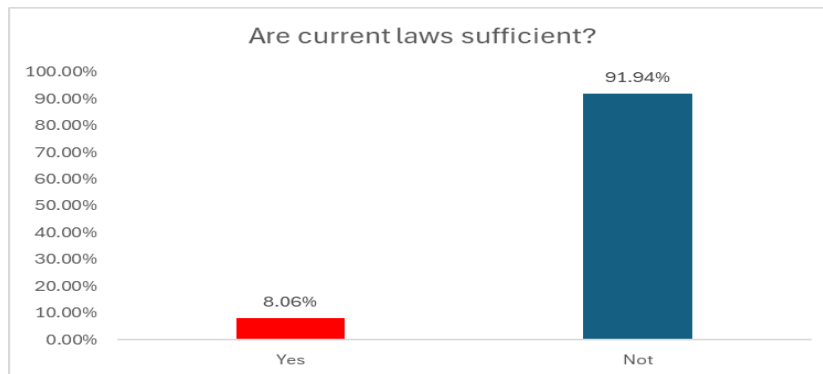
Graph 5. Outcome when respondents reported cases of animal abuse to the police.

The reasons most respondents chose not to report to the police were reinforced by the outcomes of their reports regarding animal abuse cases. In the majority of instances (55.56% + 16.67%), the perpetrators were released without consequence. In 22.22% of the cases reported to the police, the reports were dismissed. Additionally, 22.22% of the cases proceeded to court, but the perpetrators were either acquitted or received minimal penalties. Only 16.6% of the cases were handled appropriately, resulting in trials where the perpetrators were sentenced to prison. Notably, the responses categorized as "others" included intriguing comments from respondents: 1. The police merely issued a warning, 2. The case yielded no results and simply disappeared, 3. There is no point in reporting if one lacks financial resources. The current situation is profoundly troubling, underscoring systemic failures.



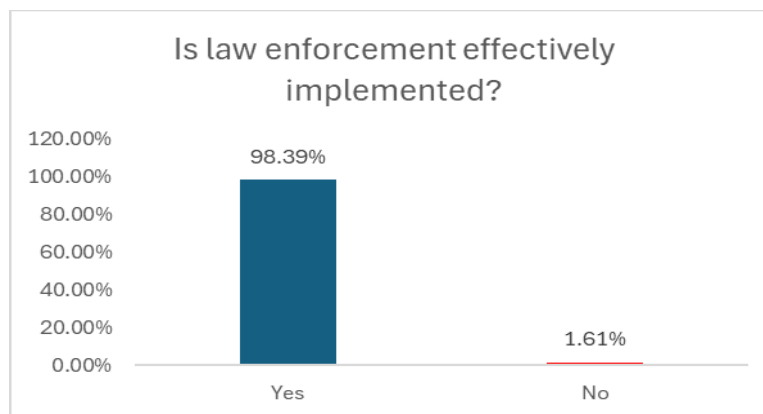
Graph 6: Awareness of Animal Protection Law

The majority of respondents recognize that Indonesia has enacted animal protection legislation. Most participants are familiar with Article 302 of the Indonesian Criminal Code, while others are aware of Decree Number 41 of 2014 concerning Livestock and Animal Health, as well as Article 337 of the new Criminal Code. Approximately 29% of respondents are not aware of the Indonesian animal protection regulations.



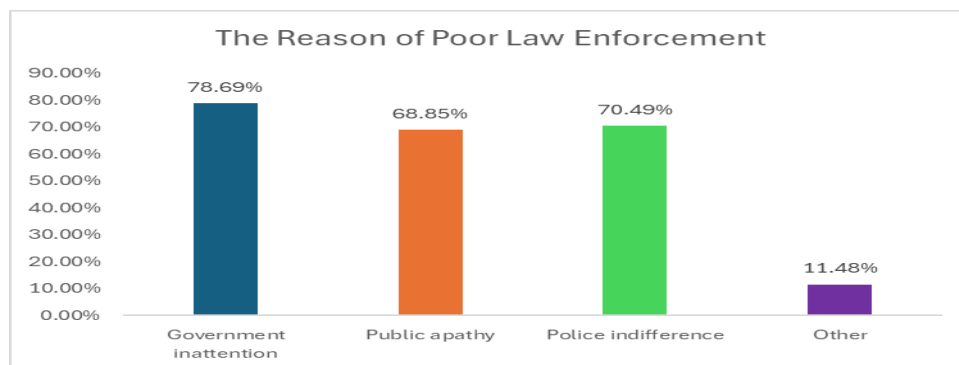
Graph 7. Responses from participants regarding whether the laws are adequate.

The majority of respondents (91.94%) selected the answer "No." This indicates that the law is not perceived to be as effective as anticipated by most respondents in safeguarding animals.



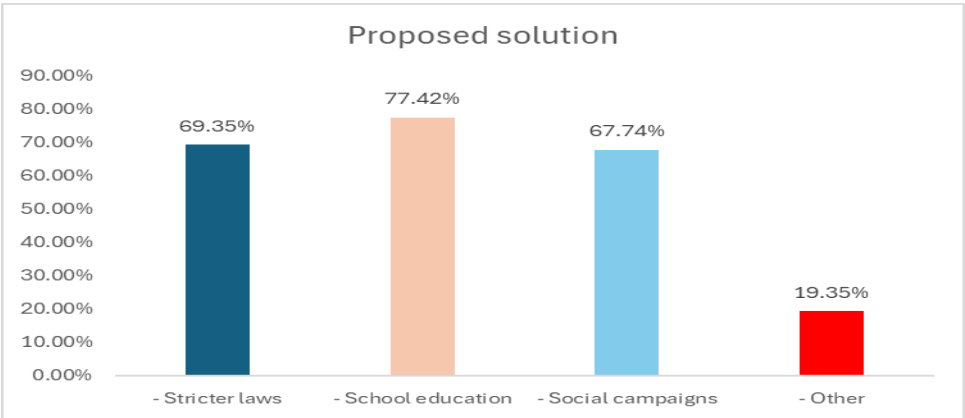
Graph 8. Responses from participants regarding the effectiveness of law enforcement implementation.

Only 1.61% of participants believe that law enforcement is effectively implemented, while 98.39% think it is not. It is not surprising that the Social Media Animal Cruelty Coalition (SMACC) has identified Indonesia as the leading source of digital content related to animal cruelty. Out of 5,500 videos examined worldwide, the report found that at least 1,626 instances of animal cruelty originated in Indonesia. This represents a troubling reality.



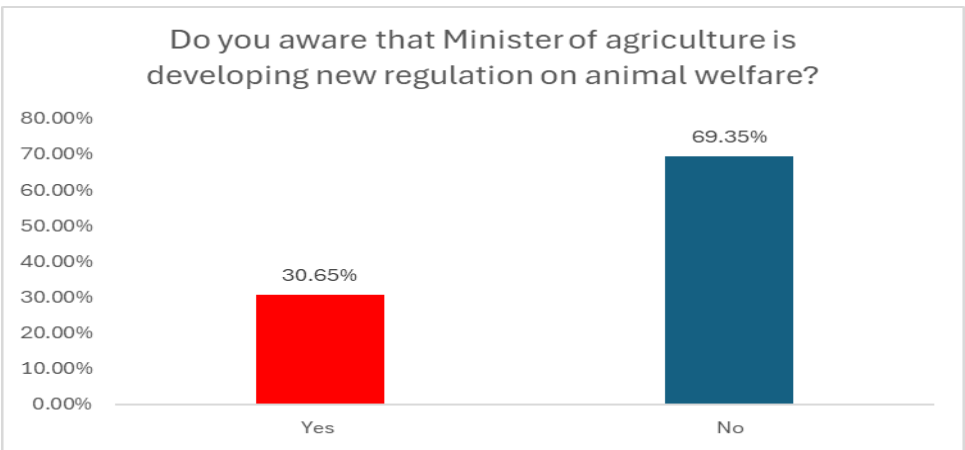
Graph 9. The Causes of Ineffective Law Enforcement

Most respondents believe that the lack of government attention, public indifference, and police apathy contribute to the ineffective enforcement of animal protection laws in Indonesia. Other contributing factors include: 1. The expectation that severe punishment for offenders will create a deterrent effect. 2. The persistence of a primitive mindset within Indonesian society, which often prioritizes religious pretense over humanitarian concerns. 3. The reluctance of police to take action. 4. Misinterpretation of religious doctrines. 5. The high costs associated with legal proceedings; without financial resources, there is no protection. 6. Insufficient education and outreach efforts. Legal provisions regarding animal welfare are seldom communicated, leading many individuals to be unaware that animal abuse is subject to legal penalties. Furthermore, issues related to animal protection are frequently regarded as less important or urgent compared to other issues, indicating that they remain a low priority for the government. There are also limited resources and funding; for instance, there is a lack of municipal animal shelters, welfare inspectors, veterinarians, and specialized monitoring agencies. 7. A significant portion, approximately 90%, of the Indonesian population exhibits selfishness, showing little concern for other living beings that share equal rights in this world.



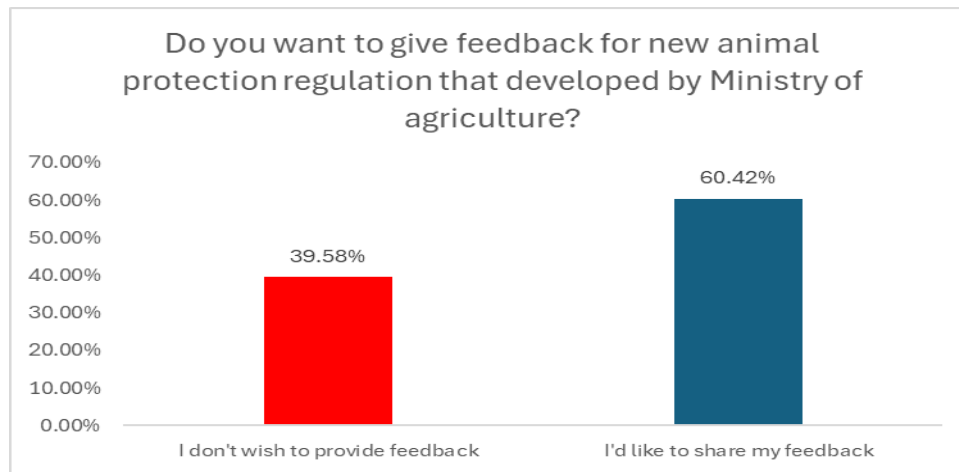
Graph 10. Suggested solution from the participants

Most participants are of the opinion that animal protection and welfare ought to be incorporated into school education. 69.35% of participants called for more stringent legislation. Meanwhile, 67.74% of participants advocated for a social campaign focused on animal welfare.



Graph 11. Awareness of New Regulation on Animal Welfare.

A majority of respondents (69.35%) are unaware that the Minister of Agriculture is in the process of developing new regulations concerning animal welfare. In fact, the ministry has held two hearings on this matter. The issue lies in the limited outreach; only select NGOs and communities were invited.



Graph 12. Willingness to provide feedback regarding the new animal welfare regulations developed by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Almost 40% of respondents are unwilling to offer feedback or input to the Ministry of Agriculture, while 60% are keen to contribute. A total of 30 respondents provided feedback for the open-ended question:

1. Community Engagement

Neighborhood units should assume greater responsibility for animal welfare and protection.

2. Law Enforcement

Laws must be enforced – not merely documented. For instance, waste management laws are in place, but do we observe individuals being prosecuted for littering or burning trash? Offenders frequently receive only warnings without substantial penalties.

3. Systemic Issues: Numerous laws exist, yet enforcement is weak. Even law enforcement officials often overlook regulations. The system is disorganized and ineffective.

4-5. Awareness & Penalties.

Public campaigns and education are essential. Penalties must be stringent – 2-3 months of criminal punishment is insufficient.

6. Deterrence: Strict law enforcement is vital to establish a deterrent effect.

7. Standards: Formulate specific, detailed animal welfare standards for both livestock and pets.

8. Stakeholder Involvement: Involve animal advocates in the drafting of laws and regulations – they experience the realities firsthand.

9. Government Coordination: Relevant departments must collaborate to create a dedicated animal welfare agency that encompasses marine and wildlife.

10-11. Legal Action: Effectively enforce regulations to penalize animal abusers. Implement punishments that genuinely deter cruelty.

12-15. Legal Framework: Introduce heavier penalties. Enforce animal protection laws on a national scale. Establish pet health insurance. Enhance animal conservation efforts.

16-20. Implementation: Ensure robust monitoring of regulation enforcement. Laws should require proper pet care. Mandatory pet registration is essential. Guarantee the Five Freedoms for animals. Enhance public education and reporting systems for abuse cases.

21. Urgent Action: Promptly ratify the Animal Protection Law to eradicate abuse – enforce penalties uniformly to establish deterrence.

22-25. Execution & Funding: The primary concern is ineffective implementation – emphasis should be placed on enforcement. Address the welfare of stray animals by providing adequate shelters and food. Allocate funds and oversee animal shelters that receive government assistance. Suggestions are futile – I will take it upon myself to rescue strays. Saving a single life is more significant than disregarded advice.

26. Policy Recommendations to the Agriculture Ministry: Establish minimum welfare standards (freedom from hunger, pain, stress, and the ability to exhibit natural behavior) - Implement strict and transparent oversight - Enforce meaningful penalties - Promote public education - Ensure protection for all animals (including pets, wildlife, and livestock) - Align with international standards set by World Organisation for Animal Health

27-38. Additional Measures: Prioritize cases of abuse. Do not abandon pets. Impose harsher penalties. Provide free sterilization programs to manage overpopulation. Prohibit the consumption of dog and cat meat through regulations. Enforce severe penalties for abusers, those who abandon animals, or those who consume dog or cat meat. Remove the oversight of pets from the Agriculture Ministry – they are incapable of managing farming effectively. Establish clear sanctions. Abolish the legal stamp and issue an apology as a form of sanction. Public consultations are necessary, along with cross-sector regulations and extensive socialization. Animals are sentient beings – it is imperative to end the consumption and abuse of dog and cat meat. This study highlights the challenges in enforcing Indonesian Animal Protection Law. Data reveals that while Indonesia is the highest producer of animal abuse content, law enforcement and government agencies fail to adequately enforce animal welfare legislation. The public is left to advocate alongside NGOs to uphold animal protection laws and rescue abused or abandoned animals, with minimal government support. Even when assistance is available, it is grossly insufficient. This situation has led to a lack of trust in the government and its agencies by the public. Indonesia urgently requires decisive action from the government to protect animals through regulation and to educate the populace on living harmoniously with animals (Arndt et al., 2022).

From the viewpoint of the Indonesian legal framework, animal abuse is characterized as the act of causing physical, emotional, or sexual harm to an animal. Activities such as engaging in animal fighting or severe neglect are also categorized as abuse. As a result of such maltreatment, animals frequently suffer from long-term health complications and, in certain instances, may perish (Brels, 2017). Animal abuse can occur either intentionally or unintentionally; however, in every case, the animal faces the potential for injury or death (Morton et al., 2022).

A criminal act is defined as a behavior performed by an individual that is forbidden by law or conducted unlawfully, and it is subject to criminal sanctions. Abuse is one of the behaviors that can be classified as a crime. According to legal principles, abuse is described as a purposeful act that inflicts unpleasant emotions, suffering, or harm. Intentionally jeopardizing human health is also considered a type of abuse. Animals are entitled to protection from mistreatment perpetrated by negligent individuals. Article 302 of the Indonesian Criminal Code pertains to animal abuse, which encompasses inflicting injury on animals, damaging their health, willfully neglecting to provide food for pets, overworking animals beyond their limits, and killing animals after subjecting them to abuse.

Following the enactment of Article 3 of the Regulation of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia No. 2 of 2012, which adjusts the limits for minor crimes and fines in the Criminal Code, the number of animal abuse cases in Indonesia remains notably high compared to other countries. Data collected by the Asia For Animals Coalition indicates that Indonesia is the leading country in uploading animal cruelty content on social media, with 1,626 out of 5,480 pieces of content originating from Indonesia. The Asia for Animals (AfA) Coalition consists of 25 prominent and respected animal welfare organizations united by a shared vision and goal to enhance animal welfare across Asia. Supported by a global network of hundreds of other animal welfare groups, AfA serves as a collective voice for its members, advocating to governments and specific institutions throughout Asia against animal cruelty.

Article 302 of the Indonesian Criminal Code indicates that:

“(1) A person found guilty of minor mistreatment of animals can be punished with up to three months in jail or a fine of up to three hundred rupiahs. This applies to: 1st, anyone who intentionally causes pain or harm to an animal without a valid reason or by going beyond what is allowed to achieve a goal; 2nd, anyone who deliberately fails to provide necessary food or care to an animal that is fully or partly owned by them and under their control, or to an animal that they are responsible for feeding.

(2) If the action leads to an illness lasting more than a week, serious injury, or the animal’s death, the offender may face up to nine months in jail or a fine of up to three hundred rupiahs for mistreatment of animals.

(3) If the animal belongs to the offender, it may be taken away.

(4) An attempt to commit this crime will not be penalized.”

What is explained in paragraph (1) refers to the crime of minor mistreatment of animals. It must be shown that:

Sub 1:

1. The individual intentionally harms, injures, or negatively impacts the animal's health.
2. The action lacked a proper objective; or
3. The behavior surpassed the acceptable boundaries.

Sub 2:

1. Intentionally withholding food or water from animals that the individual fully or partially owns or is responsible for.
2. The action was done without a legitimate purpose or exceeded what is allowed.

In the Elucidation of Article 66 paragraph [2] letter c of Law 18/2009 on Husbandry and Animal Health it is stated that abuse is defined as any action taken to acquire satisfaction and/or profit from an animal by treating the animal unfairly and/or not in line with the animal's designation or usage.

According to the the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which is the biggest and oldest charity that helps animals, there are two main types of animal abuse: physical and mental abuse. Physical abuse can happen in different ways, such as:

- a) Hitting or hurting the animal on purpose.
- b) Letting pets be hungry and thirsty.
- c) Not taking care of the animal, leading to skin problems or sickness.
- d) Keeping the animal tied up all the time.
- e) Leaving animals outside in bad weather without shelter.

Mental abuse of animals includes:

- a) Not showing love, which can make animals aggressive;
- b) Often ignoring the animal's needs and health;
- c) Keeping the animal tied up so it cannot socialize.

The effects of human abuse on animals can be severe. The animal might suffer, become permanently disabled, or even die if the abuse is too much.

Article 302 of the Criminal Code mentions that animal abuse can include, but is not limited to, minor acts like causing harm to health without a good reason, not feeding the animal on purpose, making the animal sick for more than a week, causing major injuries, or leading to disability or death. Essentially, even small acts of animal abuse have to be dealt with legally because they break the law. In Article 302 number 1 paragraph (1) of the Criminal Code, the crime of animal cruelty or minor animal abuse involves some specific elements.

A. Subjective Component

a. Intentional Elements

b. Objective Elements

i. Perpetrator: Any person

ii. Circumstance: Without lawful justification

iii. Act: Exceeding reasonable boundaries in pursuit of an objective

iv. Consequence: Causing pain, injury, or harm to health

v. Victim: An animal

The absence of a legitimate objective is evident in the execution of purposeful acts lacking specific beneficial aims or demonstrable value to individuals or society.

Furthermore, Article 302 of the Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP) stipulates penalties for all forms of animal cruelty, including infliction of injury, harm to health, and neglect (failure to provide sustenance). The original sanction prescribed a maximum imprisonment of three months or a fine of Rp 4,500.00.

Significantly, in 2012, the monetary penalty outlined in Article 302 was revised pursuant to Article 3 of Supreme Court Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 2 of 2012 (Perma 2/2012) concerning the Adjustment of Limits for Minor Crimes and the Amount of Fines in the Criminal Code. Under this regulation, the fine specified in Article 302 KUHP was increased to a maximum of Rp 4,500,000.00 (four million five hundred thousand rupiah).

Conversely, the custodial sentence remained unchanged, retaining the original maximum term of three months' imprisonment. It is important to note that the penalty structure in Article 302 is formulated as an alternative sanction ("a maximum imprisonment of three months or a maximum fine of Rp 4,500,000.00"). This formulation signifies that the court may impose either the prison sentence or the fine, but not both concurrently for the same offense under this paragraph.

Additionally, Article 302(2) imposes more severe penalties for acts resulting in:

- a. Illness exceeding one week
- b. Disability
- c. Other serious injuries
- d. Death

In such cases, the offender faces a maximum imprisonment of nine months or a maximum fine of Rp 300,000.00 (three hundred thousand rupiah), or both.

4. Conclusion

This study addresses the challenges impeding effective enforcement of Indonesia's animal protection laws. Survey findings reveal a significant disparity between existing regulations and their practical implementation. Public confidence in governmental capacity to enforce animal protection statutes is markedly low, prompting citizens to either intervene directly or seek assistance from animal rescue organizations and advocacy communities. Consequently, the deficiencies in law enforcement perpetuate a cycle of impunity for animal abuse, undermining any deterrent effect and leaving animals vulnerable to ongoing harm. Critically, the established correlation between animal cruelty and subsequent violent criminality—including patterns observed among serial offenders and psychopaths—underscores the gravity of this enforcement failure. Furthermore, such abuse frequently manifests within contexts of domestic violence, where animals, like human family members, become victims of the same perpetrators. The inadequate sentencing framework prescribed under Article 302 of the Indonesian Criminal Code pertaining to animal cruelty constitutes a significant factor contributing to the elevated incidence of such offenses within the jurisdiction. Moreover, the enforcement of this statutory provision exhibits systemic deficiencies, characterized by insufficient rigor. Perpetrators frequently evade accountability due to prohibitive financial barriers to judicial recourse faced by victims, coupled with penal sanctions that are manifestly disproportionate to the actual damages—both pecuniary and non-pecuniary—sustained. Furthermore, law enforcement authorities demonstrate excessive leniency in adjudicating animal cruelty matters, systematically trivializing these offenses through their classification as *de minimis* infractions.

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