

Patrick Marler

Midterm Proposal

Patrick Marler

DART 349

Professor Santo Romano

March 12, 2024

The topic I have chosen for my website is the life of stray dogs in Tunisia. I was first made aware of how awful the conditions are for strays when I adopted my dog Ringo, who was rescued by our friend Moona, when she found him left for dead on the streets of Tunis. Ringo was one of the lucky ones however, because it is all too common for Police in Tunisia to shoot street dogs they find since their population has grown to such a large amount. I wanted to shed some light on the cruel treatment stray dogs go through and how this inhuman method of culling the population must be stopped. It is important to treat these dogs well and find ways to help them find food and get them off the streets.

I want to make an activist website that recounts the story of my dog Ringo who miraculously survived being shot in Tunisia. It is a heartwarming story of many brave people who had the courage to step up and save the life of an abandoned dog. Ringo was taken to a veterinary hospital where he had to undergo numerous operations to extract the buckshot in his paws. He then had to spend almost 4 months in rehabilitation because he could not walk due to how severe the injuries were. Moona, the woman who found him, had already

Patrick Marler

rescued two other dogs of her own and decided to find him a home in Montreal where her mother lived. After several months of paperwork and additional medical checkups he was finally brought over to Canada. It was by pure coincidence that my mother and I had been looking to adopt a dog at around the same time that he was being flown in. We offered to be a temporary foster family for Ringo until he could find a home, but it was obvious after a few days that he was the one for us. It is hard to believe that this dog was once left for dead alone on the street because he has so much energy and brings so much joy to our household.

Tunisia has a huge problem with stray dogs. Packs of stray dogs roam the neighborhoods of large cities in search of food and shelter since many people can't afford to own dogs let alone feed them. The sad truth is that many dogs will be abandoned by their owners, most of them being puppies. These packs of dogs can be dangerous for the residents, and they can become aggressive when desperate for food. These dogs are also very territorial and can feel threatened easily. Unfortunately, there have been many documented cases of dog attacks on locals. In 2014, the Tunisian Ministry of health noted that there had been approximately 47000 dog attacks nationwide. Some have also been targeting farm animals to find food to survive. Tunisia is a very poor country so losing any livestock can be devastating for a family in need.

As a result of this ongoing crisis, the Tunisian government has allowed police to open fire on any and all dogs they see roaming the streets. On a daily basis, local law enforcement and hired groups of hunters will roam the streets and shoot countless strays, leaving them with deathly injuries and often dead in the streets. This would sometimes include people's pets as they would often get mistaken for strays. This type of behavior isn't limited to just police unfortunately, as many locals often mistreat these animals as well. The government claims that this is the best solution in order to guarantee the safety of the people, but it only ends up making people more uneasy as animals are cruelly slaughtered in front of them.

In my opinion, the solution to this problem is not wasting money on arming police against dogs and hiring groups of hunters. The government needs to create a program to sterilize stray dogs in order to safely reduce their population and invest in providing food for them so that they don't need to resort to stealing trash and killing livestock.

Sources:

“Tunisia – a cruel way to solve the stray problem – send a letter of protest!”, *OIPA international*, June 9th, 2016, <https://www.oipa.org/international/tunisia-appeal/> , accessed March 12th, 2024.

“‘It must stop one day’: Outcry erupts over Tunisia’s campaign to kill stray dogs”, *The Observers, France24*, August 11th, 2022.
<https://observers.france24.com/en/africa/20220811-tunisia-campaign-kill-stray-dogs-animal-rights> , accessed March 12th, 2024.

Volkman, Elizia, “A Dog’s Life in Tunisia”, *International News Services.com*, March 14th, 2023, <https://www.internationalnewsservices.com/featured/a-dogs-life-in-tunisia> , accessed March 12th, 2024.

“Stray dogs pose a problem in Tunisia, North Africa”, *The Arab Weekly*, April 7th, 2022, <https://the arabweekly.com/stray-dogs-pose-problem-tunisia-north-africa> , accessed March 12th, 2024.