

ANIMALS OF OUR WORLD:

**INVESTIGATION INTO
THE SIEM REAP DOG
MEAT TRADE**

2026



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INTRODUCTION

This publicly available report is addressed to the Siem Reap Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the governing body responsible for implementing the 2020 Siem Reap ban on the slaughter, sale and consumption of dog meat. We thank both the government leaders and Four Paws for working together to achieve this ban.

Unfortunately, our investigation has uncovered that in 2026, the illegal dog meat trade is still strong and visible in the province. Cambodia has one of the highest human rabies death rates per capita of any country in the world - and the trade puts every single Cambodian at risk. Therefore, we would like to bring this evidence to the government's awareness with the intention of providing collaborative solutions.

Working in Cambodia, we have witnessed the compassion, culture, and strength of the Khmer people. 90% of Cambodia supports the ban of this dangerous, violent, and cruel practice. As an international organisation, we do not want to act in ways that interfere with another culture, or place value on one species over another. However, we are committed to working with provincial leaders in the fight against unnecessary suffering and disease - for all people and animals in Cambodia.

Thank you for taking the time to read our findings and recommendations. We look forward to working together to meet the Zero by 30 rabies goals and save the 2-3 million dogs slaughtered for their meat each year.

Animals of Our World is a UK registered charity and Cambodian registered NGO. Our programmes span sanctuary, campaigns, CNVR missions, community outreach, and education. We fight for the rights of all species and hope to use this opportunity to collaborate and extend our mission for all animals.

Author: Tobias Pugh, Animals of Our World, member of Asia for Animals Dog & Cat Meat Trade Coalition.

BACKGROUND: DOG MEAT IN CAMBODIA

Dog meat and rabies

Cambodia has one of the highest rates of rabies in the world. In 2020, Four Paws and the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries were responsible for a historic ban on the dog meat trade in Siem Reap, aiming to cut rabies deaths, increase tourism, and prevent cruelty to millions of animals.

Though researchers believe the total is higher, there are still around 800 recorded human deaths from rabies each year, with dog bites causing 99% of cases. Since 2000, the Institut Pasteur in Cambodia have been testing 200 biting dogs each year and have routinely found nearly 50% test positive for the virus.

Through their 2019 investigations, Four Paws identified Siem Reap as a key area for sourcing dogs, supplying demand for Phnom Penh (where 200,000 dogs are eaten each year) and East Cambodia.

Four Paws states that the catching, slaughter, and consumption of dog meat jeopardises the health and safety of the entire Kingdom with significant societal, economic and animal welfare impacts. The trade puts dog catchers, traffickers, butchers, consumers, and the public at risk of infection.

Consumer demographics and demand

94% of Cambodians say dog meat is not part of Cambodian culture. The consumption of dog is not typically seen as a necessary or daily sustenance as only 3% of consumers regularly eat it as a main meal and 93% eat it only as 'an accompaniment to alcohol'. The name 'special meat' is common code for dog, reflecting its consumption for celebratory occasions, though there is no traditional Khmer festival or event tied to this. Peak consumption occurs around the 10th of each month (payday), showing that the meat is more for pleasure than as part of a standard Khmer diet.

After cat meat, dog is found to be the second most refused meat by Khmer people (59.8%), followed by rat (50.8%). Reasons include disease, that the animal is “unclean”, “spiritual or karmic reasons”, and dogs being “loyal and trustworthy pets that should not be eaten.” Dog is mostly avoided by women, who see the meat as dirty. However, Soi Dog Foundation found in their investigation that restaurant owners felt the number of indigenous dog meat traders and consumers are increasing.

An overwhelming majority of consumers in both Siem Reap and throughout Cambodia are male blue collar workers, between the ages of 18-29. The areas of highest consumption correlate with high populations of Chinese and Vietnamese migrants, e.g., Sihanoukville.

Sourcing and killing dogs for meat

Dogs are often collected for meat via trading with pots in poorer areas, but also by stealing from both owners and the streets. These animals are “beaten over the head into submission” and ‘frequently suffer from broken bones and wounds’ often leading to death during the capture or transportation process. The facilities dogs are taken to in Siem Reap have been found to not meet “basic hygiene standards”.

Methods of killing surviving dogs include “clubbing on the head” and then “cutting the neck with a knife”. Dogs are then “hung upside down or placed on their side until they bleed out”. Drowning is also a popular method to kill multiple dogs at the same time, as well as being hung from a tree for 30 minutes until death. All of these methods cause unnecessarily long and painful deaths, with caged dogs commonly breaking teeth off biting the cage to escape the noose.



Dog on display in a Phnom Penh market



A small transporter with pots and cages. Number plate blurred.

BACKGROUND: ENFORCEMENT

Since the ban, we have found evidence of three major wins authorities have made against the trade:

February 2021

One minivan containing 61 dogs traveling to Kampong Cham was stopped in Siem Reap province and the animals seized.

March 2021

The authorities closed a major slaughterhouse in Skun, Kampong Cham, for non-compliance.

August 2022

A truck transporting 700 dog carcasses to Kampong Thom from Banteay Meanchey province was stopped in Siem Reap.

There is, however, much more work to be done. Soi Dog, in 2023, found that that enforcement has focussed “mainly on the visibility of the trade”. They also reported that “authorities could be paid to look the other way.” Though restaurants signed commitments to stop selling the meat, it was reported there were either no check-ups or just one, with no further monitoring in place. One seller of dog carcasses said the ban caused “a little pause” and “the trade continued after authorities were settled.”

Alongside these cases, in 2019, a slaughterhouse owner who “hated” the trade, contacted Four Paws and was able to purchase land to grow rice and vegetables. We suggest that this method of retraining, where current offenders can be given new and profitable opportunities, is preferable to criminalisation.

We reached out to provincial leaders on August 3rd 2026 and August 10th 2026, but received no response to our request for information on further prosecutions.

2026 INVESTIGATION: RESTAURANTS

Availability

Despite the Siem Reap ban being in force since 2020, our investigation found that restaurants were still operating openly in 2026. By asking Tuk Tuk drivers “can you take me to a dog meat restaurant?” and following via scooter, we found nine restaurants still operating, multiple with signs advertising ‘special meat’. One Tuk Tuk driver was even happy to give us a tour of all the ones he knew.

In 2023, Soi Dog found that ‘tourists and foreign nationals were not allowed in these premises’, however, in 2026 customers and owners were very welcoming and open to Western visitors. Furthermore, all locations we entered welcomed non-Khmer investigators wanting to learn more, with customers and restaurant owners happy to take part in recorded interviews. None of these drivers, customers, or sellers displayed any fear of consequence. This change in attitude represents a worrying trend of both growth in popularity and disrespect for the law.

Some meat was available in curry form and some on a barbecue, often cooked on display at the entrance of the restaurant. This openness invites a dark curiosity to the country, with the owner saying some Western tourists often visit to try dog, even as recently as “a few days ago”.

In another restaurant, we were served a plate of dog meat without ordering. This came with a beer (as is customary with the meat) and a skull, for presentation purposes.

Outside one restaurant, we discovered that dogs were delivered alive each morning, suggesting they were killed on-site.



A restaurant sign openly advertising 'Special Meat'. Phone number blurred.

2026 INVESTIGATION: RESTAURANTS

In one restaurant, we were served a plate of dog - with a beer and a skull

Restaurant owner and employee attitudes

The owner of one restaurant, when asked about a dog sleeping in the restaurant, explained there was a difference between killing street or countryside dogs and dogs that have owners and are loved. "I love dogs" he claimed, even discussing his anger when his own dog went missing, most likely for meat. This businessman also expressed a desire to not eat dog meat, recognising the social aspect being a hurdle. He explained eating dog came from the aftermath of the Khmer Rouge and subsequent influx of Vietnamese immigrants and was not true Cambodian culture.



Piccalilli - Rescued from becoming a bar snack

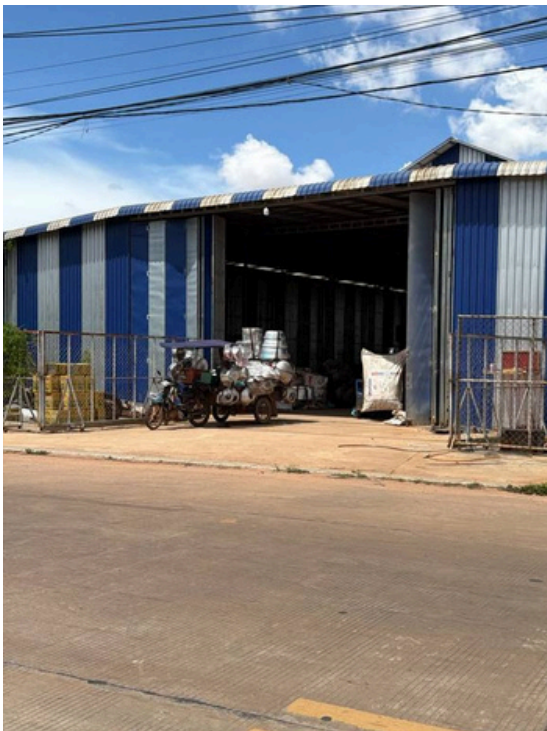
A customer from another restaurant had no issue filming and discussing the types of dog-based foods available, as well as the dark wine often drunk with it. He believed that dogs are bred and raised happily on farms in the countryside, though no evidence for this has ever been found. This customer was also not aware of killing methods when asked, appearing uncomfortable at the thought.

2026 INVESTIGATION: BASES

Warehouses

Due to dog catchers operating freely within the city since the Thai conflict, it was easy to find a location where they were active daily. At this warehouse, their vehicles are parked outside, in full display of the traffic throughout the day. This warehouse was logged as a slaughterhouse by Four Paws in 2019. We found that the base now appears to recycle scrap materials into the pans used for trading and to hold dogs before transport.

One evening, two dogs were seen in cages outside the base. When questioned and reminded it was illegal, one of the members of the group picked up a dog, hit it, then opened its mouth and spat in it. The group went inside the warehouse and locked the doors.



The warehouse where traders operate daily in the open.



One of two dogs caged outside the warehouse at night.

Uncensored images of the group (including their faces), videos of incidents, methods and exact locations have been shared privately alongside this report.

2026 INVESTIGATION: BASES

Transport

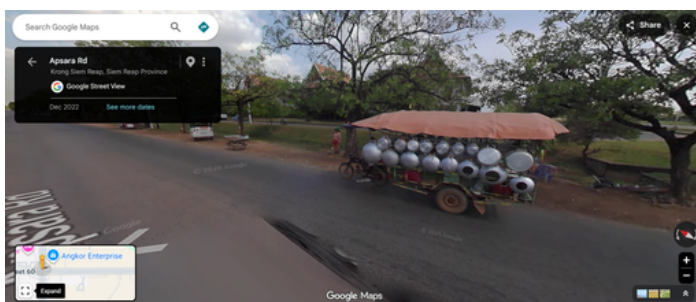
Bikes leaving this location would regularly go to another base, where a separate dog transporter was also parked. Due to the openness in which they operate, we could witness dogs being transported in daylight from the warehouse to this base or beyond. On one occasion transport of a dog between bases was witnessed, the driver drove dangerously and tried to kick an investigator off her bike for filming. The second base is also used as a home as children were seen on multiple occasions. Exposure to violence and cruelty creates huge trauma, anti-social and emotional issues on children later in life and concerns us deeply.



Observing dogs being transported by motorbike

We identified around eight vehicles, mostly without registration, and six workers who supply the majority of Siem Reap restaurants. Workers are seen throughout the day, leaving around 5pm for their homes, though some have also been spotted operating later at night along countryside routes or into enclosed spaces where we could not discreetly or safely pursue.

When checking the location of a rescued dog on Google Maps, a dog meat vehicle was clearly visible in daylight in this exact market area. The date of the images taken was December 2022, two years after the ban.



An example of a vehicle in the area carrying pots to trade and cages to imprison the dogs.
Dated December 2022

2026 INVESTIGATION: RESCUE

Though controversial as a rescue method, before the ban, dogs could be saved via purchasing from the traders. These tradesmen had no issue with discussing their work or selling the dogs. Since the ban, our experiences have been much harsher, with casual conversations met with verbal and physical attacks, including being spat at and chased by man with a machete. Because the trade has gone underground, this criminalisation has created an attitude of violence towards humans and rebellion to the law.

Recently, at another location we deem a hotspot for trafficking, we rescued a terrified dog roaming a local night market. 'Bud' had metal wire wrapped so tightly around his snout that vets thought his nose may need amputation. He was dehydrated and starved. The side of his mouth was also deeply ripped, with surgery unlikely to reconstruct his face, his teeth now permanently show through the wound. This is common practice to stop dogs from biting their captors.

With cruelty so public and 'normal', the positive values and wonder Cambodia is known for diminish through the eyes of both locals and visitors. With Siem Reap famous for its draw for tourism, exposure to this trade affects international opinion and economic growth due to fears of safety as well as disgust at the normalisation of cruelty.



'Bud', a survivor.

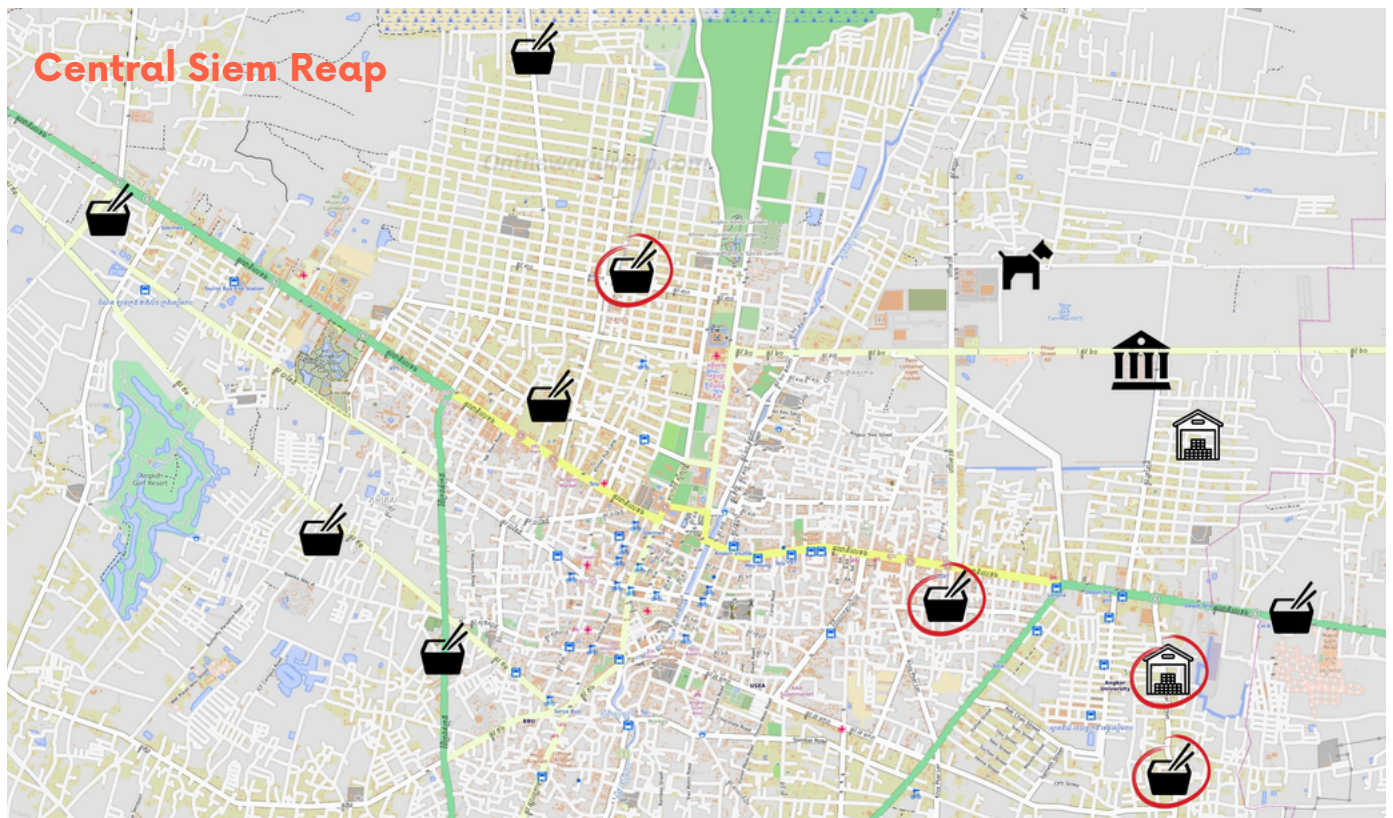
Bud had wire wrapped so tightly around his snout that vets thought his nose may need amputation.

2026 INVESTIGATION: MAPPING

We compared our findings with those given to us by Four Paws during their 2019 investigation and found three restaurants selling the meat today were also operating before the ban.

Circled restaurants and bases were operating in 2019. The others are presumed new.

RESTAURANT AND BASE MAP



BASE



DOG RESCUED



RESTAURANT



DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY
AND FISHERIES

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

We would like to propose collaborative solutions to fight the cruelty to animals, dangers to public health and reputational damage, before it grows too huge to combat effectively. These solutions include:



The Animals of Our World founder teaching children safety and welfare

1. EDUCATION

85% of dogs in Cambodia are owned, therefore education is vital for successful rabies prevention. We have, and are able to create, animal health and safety workbooks and workshops which can be added to the local school curriculum. These would include information about ownership, strays, animal health, rabies risk and how to approach, feed and treat a range of animals, giving them the knowledge to keep a generation and their families safe. Leaflets and resources dispelling the health myths of often diseased meat can also be distributed, helping to reduce the demand.

2. ENFORCEMENT AND RETRAINING

Though an increasing number join for profit, many involved in the trade express a “desperation to exit”. By working through donation based projects for low or interest free microloans (potentially via organisations such as Lendwithcare), we can ensure a smooth transition to sustainable new career paths.

While this is suitable for current offenders, it should be clear future lawbreakers should not be allowed to take advantage of this. Four Paws have a dog and cat meat trade reporting tool, where evidence can be collected for further investigation and enforcement, making sure that those endangering public health and abusing animals respect the law.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

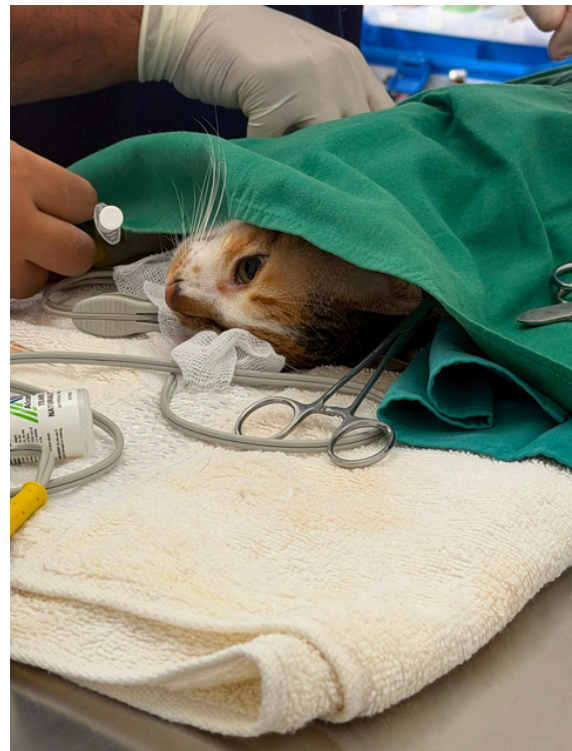
3. CATCH, NEUTER, VACCINATE, RELEASE

Cambodia has pledged to eradicate canine rabies by 2030, but without formal vaccination programmes, strategies or a full ban on the dog meat trade, this goal is threatened. Provincial support for our planned future CNVR campaigns (by both Animals of Our World and Four Paws) would have an effect beyond Siem Reap and across the country.

Working towards herd immunity and population control massively reduces suffering for both humans and animals. This can only work alongside a fully enforced ban, otherwise healthy and owned dogs become a larger proportion of those sourced for meat. A ban, accompanied by mass vaccination and sterilisation, can help Siem Reap pioneer fighting a disease that is 100% deadly but 100% preventable.



An Animals of Our World x PPAWS
CNVR project in Siem Reap 2026



Cats, their owners and the community
also benefit from these missions

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

4. EXTENSION OF POLICY ACROSS CAMBODIA

By learning from the work already done within Cambodia and Sout East Asia, we are able to work both independently and assist leaders in Cambodia in preventing unnecessary suffering for humans and animals. Working successfully together on this, with public opinion on our side, would help extend Siem Reap's pioneering ban across the Kingdom.

5. POSITIVE MEDIA CAMPAIGNING

'They Never Came Home': Cambodia's Dog Meat Trade Sparks Nationwide Ban Campaign



Animals of Our World has officially launched a campaign to end the dog meat trade in Cambodia. Photo by Four Paws

Media coverage of our campaign to extend the ban

Public awareness is incredibly important to ensure the law is followed and people remain safe. Positive stories such as new opportunities given to restaurant owners, dog thieves and slaughterhouse workers, along with statistics on rabies reduction and Cambodia's relationship to canines should be spotlighted and celebrated in the media. If possible, text messages could also be sent from the government to remind people of the law and consequences in place. As a pro-Cambodia organisation who also supports rights of all species, our messaging will focus on rabies prevention rather than western hypocrisy and outrage, as well as the compassion for animals we witness across our work.

SOURCES AND FURTHER READING

- [The Line: An Investigation into the Dog Meat Trade](#). Animals of Our World 2026
- [Dog Meat Trade Cambodia 2019 - Key findings of Investigations in Siem Reap](#). Four Paws and Animal Rescue Cambodia 2019
- [The 2020 Four Paws summary report on Dog Meat Consumption in Cambodia](#). Four Paws, Animal Rescue Cambodia and Market Strategy and Development Co, Ltd. 2020
- [Restricted Access: Cambodia Dog Meat Investigation – December 2023](#) Department of International Advocacy. Soi Dog International Foundation Report 2023.
- [Cambodia profile page](#). Mission Rabies
- [Google Streetview image of dog transporter](#). Accessed 19/08/2026
- [FOUR PAWS shuts down dog meat slaughterhouse in Cambodia](#). Four Paws 2019
- [The Dog and Cat Meat Trade: A Global Health Risk](#). Four Paws 2021
- [The Dog and Cat Meat Trade in Southeast Asia: A Threat to Animals and People](#). Four Paws 2020
- [The Dog and Cat Meat Trade and its Impact on Rabies Control, Disease Transmission and Animal Welfare](#). Dog Meat Free Indonesia 2026
- [Ending the Dog Meat Industry in South Korea](#). Humane World for Animals 2025
- [A summary report on Dog and Cat Meat Consumption in Vietnam](#). Four Paws and Market Strategy and Development Co, Ltd. 2021
- [AfA Conference 2023 | Using Education & Engagement to Close Bali's Dog Meat Trade](#). Asia for Animals Coalition 2023
- [AfA Conference 2023 | The Role of Grassroots Collaborations & Education in Ending the Dog Meat Trade](#). Asia for Animals Coalition 2023
- [AfA Conference 2023 | Engagement to End the Cruel Dog and Cat Meat Trade](#). Asia for Animals Coalition 2023

Thank you for reading our report. We hope it opens your eyes and hearts to the preventable suffering around us. Together, we can put an end to it.

This is the publicly available
English version of the report.

**A Khmer version, with links
to evidence and accurate
mapping has been sent to
the authorities.**