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Call to shut down Macau greyhound racecourse

Simon Parry

A Hong Kong-based animal welfare group has written to Macau Chief Executive Dr Fernando Chui Sai-on, asking him to close the city's greyhound racing track where hundreds of healthy dogs are put to death every year.

Animals Asia wrote to Chiu and Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Cheong U after inspecting conditions at the Canidrome, where a *Sunday Morning Post* investigation found dogs were destroyed by lethal injection at a rate of more than one a day. The group said it found dogs "in a state of neglect" at the circuit.

"Dogs with injuries were forced to run while a crowd of less than 30 people looked on," it said. "Greyhound racing isn't attracting people to the races, but the greyhounds are still suffering.

"Even minimum welfare standards are not provided for the greyhounds; when not racing, they're confined for long periods of time. When they race, they often sustain serious injuries."

Animals Asia animal welfare director David Neale said: "Racing greyhounds for entertainment inflicts severe suffering on many thousands of dogs annually.

"A large proportion of greyhounds bred for racing are deemed unsuitable and are euthanised, along with those that become injured, or are simply not considered fast enough.

"Greyhound racing is an example of animal cruelty that should be consigned to the history books."

The Animals Asia investigation follows a January report by Grey2K USA, which found that from October 21 to December 31 last year, 302 of the 655 imported racing dogs at the Canidrome suffered injuries – equivalent to four animals a day. The *Sunday Morning Post* reported last year that 383 greyhounds were put down at the Canidrome in 2010, most of them healthy dogs aged five to six years.

Apart from the injured, dogs are retired when they fail to finish in the top three for two or three consecutive races. Because the Canidrome will not release former racing dogs for adoption, all retired dogs are killed.

The Canidrome has so far declined to comment and has not responded to any of the petitions or letters from animal welfare groups.



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DAVID NEALE OF ANIMALS ASIA