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(<http://www.scmp.com/lifestyle/article/1775215/thirty-dogs-killed-month-macaus-canidrome-and-adoption-programme-sham>) [1]

Submitted by simon.oreilly on Apr 24th 2015, 12:51pm

Lifestyle

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An animal rights activist in Macau has labelled an adoption programme offered by the city's greyhound racing track a sham and claims more than 30 dogs are still being killed each month.

Albano Martins, president of Anima – the Society for the Protection of Animals (Macau) – claims only three dogs have been adopted since the Canidrome – Asia's only greyhound track – introduced the adoption programme in 2012 on orders from the Macau Government following an investigation in the *South China Morning Post* in 2011 that exposed that in 2010 383 underperforming dogs were destroyed.

Martins says dogs – as young as two or three years old – are killed if they not “profitable”. He says dogs are killed if they are ill, injured or if they fail to place in the top three in five consecutive races.

The claims come as the lease for the Canidrome expires in October this year.

He says he knows of one dog that was adopted by a vet who works for the Canidrome and two others adopted by Macau residents.

“The Canidrome doesn't allow anybody to go inside their kennels ... the three dogs that were adopted were sent to the municipal kennel [government kennel] for people to adopt there.”



Robin Fall

(<https://www.scmp.com/sites/default/files/2015/04/24/macau-canidrome-b.jpg>) [2]

“Because of this adoption scam we have changed our position – It’s no longer about the adoption programme, we want the track closed.”

In a letter sent this month (APRIL) by Anima to Leong Vai-tac, Macau’s Secretary for the Economy and Finance Affairs, Martins claims the track is engaging in illegal betting created through its broadcasting of races, aiding tax evasion. “I suspect illegal betting ... something is wrong to keep the track open when it is making very little money.”

Despite regular government tax breaks – 50 per cent in 1985, 35 per cent in 1988 and 25 per cent in 2005 – the Canidrome’s gross annual revenue for 2014 was 145 million patacas a decrease of 18.54 per cent from 2013. In 2013 the gross income was 178 million patacas, according to the Inspection and Coordination Bureau (DICJ), the government body overseeing gaming activities in the former Portuguese colony. Martins says the same amount is “made in just four hours in the casino industry.”

Martins says the track has been an “economic disaster” for the government who owns the land which he thinks would be better used for community projects.

Watch: Scenes from the Canidrome which critics claim is "slavery" for dogs

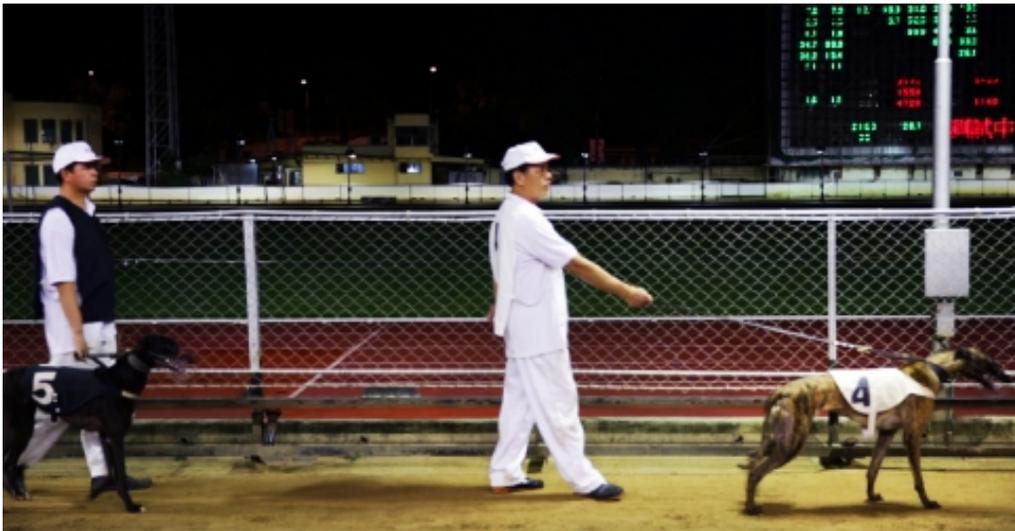
Emails and phone calls to the Canidrome over the past month have been ignored, but the Canidrome's website states: "Greyhounds, having retired from Macau Canidrome, can also become tame family pets and good companions for life given the professional training and assessment. We are committed to protecting the rights of these greyhounds and the [adoption] Programme is the best opportunity for you, as a caring person, to extend the well-being of these dogs." The site also includes information on dog adoption procedures as well as a section on Happy Dog, the first successful case in the Macau Greyhound Adoption Programme.

Because of this adoption scam we have changed our position. It's no longer about the adoption programme, we want the track closed.

Albano Martins, president of Anima

Martins says new dogs continue to be imported from Australia, despite a ban on passports imposed by the Greyhounds Australasia Ltd, the industry body in Australia. He says some dogs are also sold at public auctions in Macau for four to five times the base price. He says from July 2014 to January 2015, 3.5 million patacas was made from 17 auctions. "Dogs are seen as merchandise. The government does not care about reducing the number of imports or the number of races a day – 18 races a night, five times a week." He says the number of races is also a breach of the track's contract which states it can stage only 12 races on race days, 160 days a year. "This schedule is gruelling. It's a bloody business."

He says the only human contact the 730 dogs at the track have is with their trainers. "It is slavery." As for the conditions the dogs are kept in at the track: "Nobody knows what is going on there. It is so secretive ... there needs to be more transparency."



Robin Fall

(<https://www.scmp.com/sites/default/files/2015/04/24/macau-canidrome-c.jpg>) [3]

Martins says there has been global interest from people keen to adopt greyhounds from Macau: “We’ve had people from Hong Kong, Australia, the US and Portugal asking us if they can adopt a greyhound.” He says applications to the Canidrome to adopt the dogs have been ignored.

Netizens have taken action with an online Anima petition (<https://www.change.org/p/anima-macau-please-help-us-end-the-suffering-of-our-greyhounds>) [4] urging the government to abolish greyhound races. Martin says the online petition and signature-collection drive would continue until July.

“We hope the chief executive [Fernando Chui Sai-on] will respond to our appeal as soon as possible.”

Greyhound racing globally has been in a decline for years with only eight countries holding legal greyhound racing: Australia, China (in Macau), Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Britain and the US. Figures in the US from the Association of Racing Commissioners International show that gambling on greyhounds declined by 67 per cent between 2001 and 2011.

In July and October, Anima will meet with international organisations to discuss the issue.

At the Anima shelter in Coloane, Martins gives a tour of the shelter, his voice at times drowned out by the chorus of dogs (there are about 300 dogs at the shelter as well as 150 cats and two rabbits). He says if the Canidrome closes then the shelter could not accommodate the 700 dogs. “We are already at full capacity – we even have dogs in the toilets.

“But if we have to, we will put the 700 rescued greyhounds on a plane and send them to Portugal. That is an option.”

See the 2011 report here
(<http://www.scmp.com/article/969700/finishing-line>) [5]

More on this:

- Yat Yuen Canidrome’s future hangs in balance amid competition from casinos and pressure from animal

- rights groups (<http://www.scmp.com/lifestyle/article/1775216/macaus-greyhound-track-going-dogs>) [6]
- Greyhounds Australasia bans racing dog exports to Macau track (<http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1460628/greyhounds-australasia-bans-racing-dog-exports-macau-track>) [7]
 - 50 years in operation for Macau's canidrome for greyhound races (<http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1300975/50-years-operation-macaus-canidrome-greyhound-races>) [8]
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