

Macau greyhound track faces new pressure to close

Macau animal charity submits 270,000-strong petition calling on government to act

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Racing may be halted in Macau. Photo: Edward Wong

Macau's controversial greyhound racing track is facing new pressure after a leading animal rights group handed a 270,000-strong petition to the city's government demanding its closure.

The Yat Yuen Canidrome, Asia's only greyhound racing track, has long faced criticism for killing dogs that fail to perform. Its lease from the government is up at the end of this year, and Macau animal welfare charity Anima says the time is ripe to close it down for good.

"We expect the government to close the Canidrome. There are no economic, social or political reasons for not doing so," said Anima president Albano Martins.

He said "important members" of the community in the former Portuguese enclave supported its closure.

The canidrome, located in one of the most densely populated areas of Macau, is run by Macau (Yat Yuen) Canidrome Co. Ltd. Casino tycoon Stanley Ho Hung-sun's fourth wife, lawmaker Angela Leong On-kei, is an executive director of that company.

Martins argued that the land on the Macau peninsula could be given over to public space. His group plans to launch an opinion poll and make suggestions on community projects for the site.

Closing the track would not only benefit the local community but also halt cruelty, Martins said. The *Sunday Morning Post* has reported claims that as many as 30 dogs per month were killed at the Canidrome.

Anima last week held an international roundtable on greyhounds in Macau with animal rights groups from Australia, the mainland, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Britain and the United States.

"All of these organisations said they would help to facilitate the adoption of the animals" once the track is closed, noted Martins.

Anima has drafted contingency plans to ensure that about 700 greyhounds find new homes.

During the meeting, the groups also agreed on an agenda to block the development of the greyhound racing industry worldwide, particularly in Asia.

Canidrome management did not respond to requests for comment yesterday.

This article appeared in the South China Morning Post print edition as Greyhound track faces new push for closure