

Foreword

The following investigation was commissioned by Safe Haven for Donkeys because of a growing frustration by animal welfare groups in Kenya and elsewhere, that donkeys continued to be slaughtered for their skins despite a ban being put in place by the Kenyan government in 2019. We commissioned a known and trusted veterinary contact who lives in Kenya to undertake the investigation at a cost of £2600.

The objectives were to determine if rumours of ongoing slaughter were true and where this was taking place in an effort to highlight potential illegal activity. Sadly, the investigation did confirm that the needless slaughter was happening under the pretense that the donkeys were from herds specifically farmed for the purpose and that they were killed for meat only. From the evidence we obtained, we were able to show that breeding herds do not exist nor would they provide a viable or sustainable source of donkeys.

We shared this evidence with other welfare groups in the hope that it may help to support the government and owners who are facing court proceedings brought against them by the main slaughterhouses who are opposing the 2019 ban.

REPORT ON SURVEY OF OPERATIONS OF 3 DONKEY SLAUGHTER HOUSES IN KENYA DECEMBER 2020

OBJECTIVE

1. To determine if the donkey slaughter houses are operating or not.
2. To identify if the ban on donkey slaughter is operational.
3. To determine if any donkeys are been transported to or held at the slaughter houses

ACTIVITY PLAN

1. One day visit to Mogotio Goldox slaughter house
2. One day visit to Naivasha Brilliant slaughter house
3. One day visit to Fuhai slaughter house in Kithyoko and one day visit to Kitui donkey sales market
4. One day visit to Isiolo main donkey market

FINDINGS

- GOLDOX DONKEY SLAUGHTER HOUSE (MOGOTIO-BARINGO)

The facility is still well maintained. There was no one at the facility and the manager Mr. [REDACTED] was away despite initially promising us he will wait for us.

The Chinese owners still leave within the facility but were away in Mombasa as per what we were informed by Mr. [REDACTED].

They have a herd of over 250 donkeys which they claim are for breeding purposes. The donkeys have ear tags and were a mixture of males and females and a few foals. These donkeys were been cared for by herds men employed by the donkey slaughter house.

An inquiry from the police in the area and the local vet officer indicated that they have not slaughtered any donkey for the last 6 months at least during day time but no one knows what happens at night especially since we have a curfew in place in Kenya thus no movement expected at night.

We were not able to gain entrance to verify the information since there was no one at the facility to open the gates. We managed to meet a farmer who owns land next to the facility who informed us that they have not seen any activity in the slaughter house recently. We were able to see the facility partially from the raised ground outside the facility but we saw no sign of recent activities.



- STAR BRILLIANT DONKEY SLAUGHTER HOUSE (NAIVASHA-NAKURU)

We managed to meet a staff called Justus who gave us a visit of the facility.

Our first encounter near the main gate was a fresh leg remains of a donkey. The staff claimed it was a donkey that had been attacked by bees but no clarity why the bone was there or what the bee was doing attacking the donkey inside the facility

They have a herd of over 300 donkeys of which 90% are male but they claim those are breeding stock. This didn't make sense especially considering several of them were in poor welfare with injured legs and eyes thus not fit for breeding stock.

There was skin been dried at the facility which they claimed were old stock just been redried.

There was blood and feaces all over the holding and slaughter areas which they claim was due to the donkeys roaming all over the facility and some were injured.

The facility looks fully operational and well maintained even though there was no activity seen on the day of visit.

We spoke to a Mr [REDACTED] who informed us that they are slaughtering donkeys at night during curfew hours when no one can observe. Apparently, staff report to work just before curfew hours start. Based on having a breeding stock which is mainly male we did suspect this could be true. Unfortunately, due to the curfew there is no way of verifying it. We managed to get a photo of a pick-up ferrying donkeys to the slaughter house



- **FUHAI DONKEY SLAUGHTER HOUSE (KITHYOKO-MACHAKOS)**

The facility is run down and poorly maintained. The facility was closed 10 months ago due to environment pollution even before the ban was put in place. There was no one at the facility and the photos we were able to take for the facility showed its truly not in use. Even the sign post is worn down. Grass is unkept and the main gate is bolted tight and clear signs could be seen of a facility rotting away. We managed to meet the local leaders who informed us that the facility was closed due to breaking Environmental laws and before they could solve the issues, the ban came and thus the Chinese abandoned the whole trade. They said they were hoping to acquire the facility for use to slaughter sheep, goat and cattle by the county government.

- **ISIOLO AND MWINGI LIVESTOCK MARKETS**

A visit to the two main markets revealed that donkeys are still been bought and transported to Nakuru. There were many donkeys already bought at the market awaiting transportation to a breeder in Nakuru. It seems donkeys are been bought with the claim of been a breeding stock.

CONCLUSION

There seems to be a hidden agreement between government and the donkey slaughter houses to acquire their own breeding stock if they want to keep operating. Since it doesn't make sense for them to build breeding stock if they are never to be reopened.

There is high likely that Naivasha donkey slaughter house is still operating possibly periodically and at curfew hours based on the observations above.

Donkeys are still been bought for the slaughter houses thus the trade is still ongoing despite claims of no slaughter.

Mr. [REDACTED] of telephone number +254 [REDACTED] is willing to provide more information to if need be.

RECCOMENDATION

There is need for total ban of donkey slaughter since as it stands now there is a high likelihood that, the slaughter houses might reopen soon and worst is they might claim to be slaughtering their own stock when in reality they will be slaughtering donkeys from all over the region.

End Note from Safe Haven for Donkeys

Whist we recognise that Kenya is not in our normal field of operations, the slaughter of donkeys for skins is threatening the worldwide population, including the Middle East where we do operate services to improve the welfare of working donkeys.

Donkeys are still a vital resource to some communities who rely on them for basic needs such as transporting water to homes. This heartless trade in their skins must stop and the more focus we can attract to the issue the better.

The Chinese market is hugely valuable and with seemingly infinite resources at its disposal. It has already obliterated its own population of 12 million donkeys which is why it has turned its attention to other countries. Help us to stop the mass slaughter of donkeys by raising awareness of this cruel trade wherever you can.