

Dear Congressional Leadership and Membership,

On behalf of 44 organizations dedicated to ending cruelty to animals, we wish to express our deep concern regarding **a shocking and disturbing online trend: animal torture videos.**

In recent years, twisted, clandestine “communities” have formed in which people around the world create and share “crush” **videos depicting unthinkable acts of abuse** – including mutilation, burning, and killing – of cats, monkeys, and other innocent animals.

The Issue

Videos of extreme animal torture for “amusement” and profit are spreading like wildfire on social media sites, encrypted chats, and other online sources. Telegram has emerged as the platform of choice to distribute, exchange and trade in extreme and extensive violent torture content, as well as recruit new abusers, with the horrific, harmful content often posted on mainstream social media platforms, such as Facebook, as well.

A recent CNN report exposed videos of live cats being mutilated, set on fire, electrocuted, liquified in blenders, dismembered and subjected to other gruesome acts. These videos are then circulated online by underground cat torture rings **originating in China, which include members in the U.S. and across the globe.**

The CNN report cites data gathered by Feline Guardians that shows “a 500% increase in new torture videos added to the Chinese Telegram groups they monitor between June 2024 and February 2025, with a new video being uploaded on average around every 2.5 hours.” More alarming, in the first two months of 2025, more than 500 new torture videos were uploaded, with most coming from abusers that had not uploaded content before, indicating growing interest and participation in these global torture rings.

There is currently no law in China protecting companion animals from cruelty, allowing perpetrators of even the most gruesome acts to walk free, despite some punitive actions from universities (such as a recent case where a student was expelled for torturing cats).

In other countries, baby monkeys are victims of vile cruelty for online videos. A 2023 report from Lady Freethinker and Action for Primates revealed hundreds of torture videos posted for “amusement.” The same year, BBC News released a documentary exposing this global network of sadistic monkey torture, which originated on YouTube and then moved to Telegram and Facebook. These rings involve people in the US, UK, and other countries commissioning video makers in Indonesia to carry out the depraved acts.

Evidence suggests that humans may be at risk, as animal torture is strongly linked to violence against humans. People who commit atrocities toward animals are more likely to engage in other illegal activities, such as abusing children, or even committing mass shootings. One study found that 43% of school shooters between 1988 and 2012 had a history of animal abuse. A study published in the Forensic Research and Criminology International Journal found that animal cruelty is “a significant indicator of violence towards humans, up to and including

intimate partner abuse, sexual assault, rape, murder.” Innocent children are also at risk of witnessing animal cruelty content online. Data from the UK showed that 23% of schoolchildren aged 10-18 years had witnessed animal cruelty or neglect on social media. The RSPCA concluded that “Young children are being exposed to horrific incidents of animal suffering online in ways previous generations have simply not experienced.”

Indeed, a recent criminal case in the US involving online monkey “crush” videos includes charges for **“production, distribution and receipt of a visual depiction of the sexual abuse of children because a minor was paid to abuse the monkeys,”** according to the DOJ.

A 2020 literature review found that witnessing animal cruelty is both traumatic to children and increases likelihood that they themselves will commit violence in the future.

Global Government Actions Against Illegal Activities Online

As a response to the growing presence of harmful and illegal activities online, the EU passed the Digital Services Act in 2022, which requires platforms to produce annual reports on their moderation efforts, act rapidly to remove illegal content, and provide transparency for their algorithms.

In 2023, the UK passed the Online Safety Act – currently in preliminary rollout stages – which holds social media companies and search services responsible for users’ safety. Within the same year, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child released a comment stating, “children must be protected from all forms of physical and psychological violence and from exposure to violence, such as domestic violence or violence inflicted on animals.”

Despite these global actions, the US has yet to enact any legislation holding online platforms accountable for harmful or illegal activities posted on their properties.

Please Call to End the Horror

We urge you to denounce the horrifying and dangerous phenomenon of online crush videos with a joint congressional resolution condemning the proliferation of this content and calling on governments throughout the world, such as China, to do their part in protecting animals from this torture. Further, we encourage you to push for legislation holding online platforms accountable for harmful or illegal activities posted on their websites.

We sincerely thank you for your time and consideration, and hope the United States will continue to be a leader for the protection of companion animals across the globe.

Sent on behalf of the following organizations:

1. ABConservation Foundation Inc.
2. Action for Primates
3. Anima
4. Animal Defenders International
5. Animal People, Inc.
6. Animal Protection Denmark
7. Animals Aotearoa
8. Animals Australia
9. Back To Life Dog Rescue
10. Ban Animal Trading South Africa
11. Big Cat Rescue
12. Born Free Foundation
13. Born Free USA
14. British Hen Welfare Trust
15. Center for Orangutan Protection
16. Compassion Unlimited Plus Action
17. Compassionate Nepal
18. Elephants in Japan
19. European Link Coalition
20. FOUR PAWS USA
21. Help Animals India
22. Hollow Paws
23. Hong Kong Shark Foundation
24. Humane Animal Society (HAS)
25. IAPWA Penang
26. In Defense of Animals
27. International Primate Protection League
28. Japan Anti-Vivisection Association (JAVA)
29. Kalaweit
30. Karuna Society for Animals and Nature
31. Lady Freethinker
32. Lifelong Animal Protection Charity
33. NY4Whales
34. Prime Earth
35. Sentient Animals Vietnam
36. SHARAN
37. Soi Dog Foundation
38. Susy Utzinger Stiftung für Tierschutz
39. Thai Animal Guardians Association
40. Thrive Philanthropy
41. Voice for Asian Elephants Society (VFAES)
42. Voice4Lions
43. Wanicare Foundation
44. Whale and Dolphin Conservation

