Form No. HCJD/C-1

JUDGMENT SHEET.
IN THE ISLAMABAD HIGH COURT, ISLAMABAD

W.P No.2165 of 2025

Nelofar

Versus

Islamabad Capital Territory, through the Chief & Deputy Chief Commissioners, etc.

W.P No.177 of 2026

Muhammad Ajmal Khan Baloch

Versus

Chief Commissioner, ICT etc.

Dates of Hearing: 23.02.2026 & 04.03.2026

Petitioner by: Mr. Altamush Saeed, Advocate.
Shamsa Jabeen Kayani, Advocate (in W.P. 177-2026).

Respondents by: Mr. Shaharyar Tariq, Advocate and Ms. Safina Sarfraz Rauf Advocates for CDA.
Ms. Shaneela Razzaq, Advocate for CDA in (W.P. 177-2026)
M/s Hassan Rasheed Qamar, Ch. Waseem Bahadur and Muhammad Tayyib, Advocates.
Mr. Sarfraz Rauf and Ms. Asia Batool, learned Assistant Attorney General.
Hafiz Ati Ullah, Libah Nadeem, Mehraj Tareen, Umair Ahmed and Muhammad Naeem Wahid, State Counsels.
Khalid Mehmood Khan, Addl. Legal Advisor MCI.
Mr. Muhammad Rashid Cheema, AD (A/F) on behalf of respondent No.8.
Ms. Ayesha Shehzad, Assistant Director (Wildlife), Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB).

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KHADIM HUSSAIN SOOMRO, J.:– Through this judgment I inted to decide the instant Writ Petition as well as Writ Petition No. 177-2026, as common question of law and facts is involved. Through this writ petition, the petitioner seeks the following reliefs:-

> *(1) Declare the actions of Respondent No. 1 to 10 to be illegal and in violation of the notified Stray dog population control policy for ICT and the IWMB VMCI Islamabad High Court decision PLD 2021 1SL 06 with persuasive reliance namely on the Punjab Animal Birth Control Policy of 2021 read with ICA 277/2017 Hamza Khan v Govt of Punjab*

and WP 3787/2024 Anila Umair v Govt of Punjab and issue a permanent direction to them for not violating the policy and further Respondents may be restrained from taking any illegal actions regarding the illegal killings eradication relocation/capture of dogs across Islamabad whereby SDPCC may be closed on an interim basis until it is handed over in a credible animal welfare organization in the best interest of humans and animals.

(2) *Direct the respondents to fulfil their respective duties per the Stray dog population control Policy Article 5(4) and Article 6-Education, Regulatory Framework*

(3) *Direct respondents to submit an SOP and records of animals kept at SDPCC not limited to their capture, neuter, vaccination and relocation.*

(4) *Direct respondents to not pick up any lactating, collared, healthy, sterilized and vaccinated dogs in Islamabad. Develop SOPS for picking up unhealthy or injured animals before taking them to SDPCC as it puts the center at risk, given no regulatory framework has been developed.*

(5) *Further direct respondents to develop a transparent process via public-private partnerships for issuing such tender offers to people based on merit to credible animal welfare organizations and offer them the required funding*

(6) *Direct respondents to develop criminal penalties not limited to fines and imprisonment in addition to punishments such as permanent forfeiture of animals and permanently disallow any ownership or interaction with animals and mandatory animal welfare related community service and education.*

(7) *That the policy's regulatory framework development structure to be created under Article 5(4) be operationalized through the development of A steering committee with addition of at least one expert in Animal Laws with relevant qualifications including a Masters in Animal Law, a veterinarian, food technologist, Animal welfare NGOs and CDA, MCI, MOCC, EPA, IWMB officials etc.*

(8) *That an animal abuse registry and dog bites database be created as a neutral mechanism for ensuring objective numbers are made available to the Government and the public on number of dog bites, vaccination and sterilization made to ensure both parents, women, the elderly and children can feel safe while being surrounded by community dogs. It is scientifically proven people who abuse dogs tend to become domestic abusers as well.*

(9) *Declare that dog culling is an ineffective method of eradicating of rabies as it spreads misinformation, puts a massive financial burden in a crippling economy of Pakistan, and violates Islamic treatment of animals is illegal and unconstitutional and shall have a strict fine if someone kills or harm stray animal under the policy.*

(10) *Direct the respondents for the development of a One Health approach for the eradication of rabies and reduction of zoonotic disease spillover under the policy.*

(11) *Direct the respondents to not violate the implementation of the Stray dog population control policy for ICT and implement it in its letter and spirit.*

(12) *Permanently restrain the Respondents and all public functionaries for carrying out campaigns targeted at killing stray dogs by poisoning or shooting them or keeping at unqualified housing facilities*

(13) *Direct Respondents to take reasonable measure prescribed under the policy rather than mercilessly killing or improperly capturing stray dogs and amend any laws that contravene the policy*

(14) *Declare that dogs have sentiments and emotions and should not be treated cruelly/brutally by the Respondents,*

(15) *Direct that to end rabies the only effective method is vaccinations, sterilizations or TNVR facilities by Veterinary Doctors. Further declare that under the regulatory framework make it as mandatory as only a duly appointed veterinarian by the can verify to the rabid and*

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incurable nature of a dog and humanely euthanize it using a medical drug Under no circumstances shall even a rabid dog be culled and a healthy dog must be humanely sterilized and vaccinated and relocated from where it was found as a mechanism to ensure more dangerous dogs do not take its place in society.

(16) Direct Respondents to initiate compulsory mass vaccination of stray dogs against rabies conducting sterilization of such stray dogs;

(17) Direct the Respondents to take steps for an efficient and effective Dog Population Management;

(18) Direct the Respondents to raise awareness about the tools for reproductive control in dogs;

(19) Direct the Respondents to hold sensitization trainings in light of Islam and the policy for its own staff and also offer a subject on animal and environmental welfare across Schools in Punjab in line with Article 9, 9A and 25A of the Constitution and Article 6 of the policy while working with NGOs and educational institutes

Any other relief this Honorable Court deems fit in view of the circumstances explained above may graciously be also allowed.

And through Writ Petition no. 177 of 2026 the petitioner seeks following relief:-

i. Declare that the failure of the Respondents to effectively control the stray dog population constitute a gross violation of the fundamental rights of the citizens of Islamabad, particularly the right to life (Article 9) and health.

ii. Directing the Respondents to immediately constitute a competent body, inclusive of relevant scientific and public health experts and community stakeholders, to review and strictly implement the legally binding ICT Stray Dog Population Control Policy 2020 and the ICT Bylaws 2023.

iii. Issue a direction of quashing the de facto operational policy, including the exclusive reliance on the unproven TNVR/ABC model, to the extent it fails to prioritize Public Health and Safety as a Public Health Emergency and is non-compliant with international scientific guidelines for rabies-endemic developing countries.

iv. Grant any other relief that this Honourable Court may deem fit and proper in the circumstances of the case, including the award of costs.

2. At the very outset, learned counsel for the petitioners contended that the superior Courts of the country have widely interpreted the right to life guaranteed under Articles 9 and 9A of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973, to encompass not merely human existence but a life of dignity, environmental balance, and ecological protection. Reliance was placed upon the judgment reported as PLD 2021 Islamabad 06, wherein the court recognized the natural rights of wild animals and acknowledged their intrinsic link to human welfare and public health, holding that they are protected under the constitutional framework. It was further contended that animals possess inherent rights under Article 9 of the Constitution and that human beings, being the

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dominant species, bear a fiduciary duty to guard, protect, and cater to the behavioral, social, and physiological needs of animals. Such an obligation, it was argued, is essential not only for protecting animals but also for safeguarding human survival and maintaining ecological equilibrium on the planet. Learned counsel further contended that Islamic teachings and principles unequivocally command kindness towards animals and strictly prohibit the infliction of cruelty or unnecessary suffering upon them. Reference was made to the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), which contain numerous injunctions and examples emphasizing compassion and humane treatment of animals. It was also contended that international instruments, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, advocate for the protection of children from all forms of violence, which, by necessary implication, includes exposure to animal cruelty, as such acts adversely affect their psychological and moral development.

3. Learned counsel for the respondents Nos. 3 and 5, at the very outset, made a Conceding statement to the prayer and submitted that they are ready to entertain the suggestion proposed by the petitioners. Furthermore, on the subject issue, the counsel submits that amount of Rs.19,000/- is being spent on Trap, Sterilization, Vaccination, and Release (TNVR) of stray dogs. Whereas the counsel for respondent No. 2 submits that in compliance with the directions of this court passed in Writ Petition No. 1155 of 2020 dated 21-05-2020. The Prescribe Policy and mechanism regarding the stray dogs has been framed, and a committee for the Management of Stray Dogs in ICT has been formulated. He further submits that the committee, consisting of seven members, has been constituted to address the subject issue professionally and productively.

4. I have heard the arguments of learned counsels for the parties and perused the record with their able assistance.

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5. Through these writ petitions, the petitioners have invoked the constitutional jurisdiction of this Court under Article 199 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973, seeking various directions against the respondents with regard to the alleged non-implementation and violation of the Stray Dog Population Control Policy in the Islamabad Capital Territory (The Policy). The petitioner has, inter alia, prayed for restraining the respondents from carrying out alleged unlawful measures such as killing, relocation, and improper handling of stray dogs, and has further sought directions for formulation and enforcement of regulatory mechanisms, transparency in animal management practices, and adoption of humane and scientifically recognized methods for control of stray dog population, including vaccination and sterilization, in the larger interest of public health, environmental balance, and animal welfare.

6. The Stray Dog Population Control Policy for the Islamabad Capital Territory, notified vide reference No. 10(01) IWMB-2020 dated 28.12.2020, read with subsequent notification dated 10.08.2020, and in the backdrop of the judgment rendered by this court and reported in PLD 2021 Islamabad 06. The principal grievance of the petitioners is that the respondents have failed to implement the said policy in its true letter and spirit, particularly Articles 5(4) and 6 thereof, thereby resulting in arbitrary, unregulated, and allegedly unlawful handling of stray dogs within the territorial limits of Islamabad.

7. The "Policy on Stray Dog Population Control in Islamabad Capital Territory" was formulated by the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board under the Ministry of Climate Change, Government of Pakistan. The said policy provides a regulatory and institutional framework for humane, scientific, and coordinated management of stray and feral dog populations, keeping in view the dual objectives of safeguarding public health, particularly against zoonotic diseases such as rabies, and ensuring animal welfare. It defines guiding principles, definitions, institutional responsibilities, and control mechanisms,

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placing primary responsibility upon the Metropolitan Corporation of Islamabad, with supportive roles assigned to the Livestock and Dairy Development Department, environmental agencies, private veterinarians, and civil society. The policy further envisages adopting modern population control techniques, including vaccination, sterilization, regulation of ownership and breeding, and public awareness, while discouraging inhumane practices such as indiscriminate culling, thereby aiming to strike a balance between human safety, environmental concerns, and the ethical treatment of animals.

8. During the pendency of the instant petition, the petitioners placed on record, through a civil miscellaneous application, certain photographic material. A careful perusal thereof prima facie depicts a number of dogs lying dead in a vehicle attributed to the Capital Development Authority. When confronted with a specific query regarding the alleged killing of animals, the respondents were unable to furnish any cogent, lawful, or satisfactory explanation. This state of affairs raises serious concerns, not merely of administrative lapse, but of a fundamental departure from the rule of law and the normative standards governing humane treatment of living beings. It is by now well settled that even in matters of public safety, the exercise of State authority must remain tempered by legality, proportionality, and compassion. The indiscriminate and unexplained destruction of animal life, if established, stands in stark conflict with the internationally recognized principles of animal welfare, which mandate humane and regulated control measures, and is equally inconsistent with the ethical and juristic foundations of Islamic law, which enjoin mercy, restraint, and accountability in the treatment of animals. Such conduct, therefore, cannot be countenanced in a civilized legal order, where the legitimacy of state action is measured not only by its objective but also by the means adopted to achieve it.

9. The teachings of Islam unequivocally condemn cruelty to animals and emphasize that even where control or elimination becomes necessary, it must be

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undertaken with restraint, necessity, and in the least painful manner. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have prohibited the needless killing of animals. It has ordained kindness even at the time of slaughter, thereby underscoring that life, irrespective of its form, is a trust subject to ethical limits. Viewed in this backdrop, any act amounting to mass and indiscriminate killing of animals, without lawful justification and adherence to humane standards, cannot be reconciled either with the principles of international law or with the moral and legal framework of Islamic law. Such conduct, therefore, is not only legally untenable but also ethically indefensible in a society governed by the rule of law and guided by values of compassion and justice.

10. The lord of the world in the holy Quran in Surah Al-An'am, 6:38 says "There is no creature on the earth or bird that flies with its wings but that they are communities like you". In another verse, Allah says, "And the earth, He has assigned it to all living creatures." (Surah Ar-Rahman, 55:10). Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) says " that a good deed done to an animal is as meritorious as a good deed done to a human being, while an act of cruelty to an animal is as reprehensible as an act of cruelty to a human being". This statement conveys that kindness, mercy, and compassion are not confined to human interactions alone but extend to all living creatures. Acts of care towards animals carry moral and spiritual reward, whereas cruelty towards them attracts moral blame, thereby placing animal welfare within the broader framework of ethical responsibility in Islam.

11. It is now increasingly acknowledged in modern constitutional thought that animals are not mere chattels or inanimate objects to be dealt with solely at human convenience; rather, they are living, sentient beings, capable of pain, distress, comfort, and social response. The law, therefore, cannot remain indifferent to their existence. Life, in its constitutional and moral conception, is not a value confined to human survival alone; it is the foundational premise

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upon which all legal protection against cruelty and unnecessary suffering is built. An animal, by virtue of being alive, possesses a natural claim to exist in an environment compatible with its behavioral, social, and physiological needs. To deny such protection is not merely to neglect a creature of God, but to diminish the ethical content of law itself. The prevention of cruelty to animals is thus not an isolated statutory concern; it is integrally connected with the broader constitutional promise of a civilized society governed by dignity, restraint, and compassion. Once the law recognizes that an animal can feel pain and suffering, it necessarily follows that the state and its functionaries are under a legal as well as moral obligation to ensure that such suffering is not inflicted arbitrarily, unnecessarily, or in excess of lawful necessity. Cruelty, neglect, and indiscriminate destruction of animal life cannot be justified on the basis of administrative convenience, for the true measure of a lawful society lies not in how it treats the powerful, but in how it safeguards those living beings that are wholly dependent on human conscience and institutional responsibility. Viewed from another angle, the relationship between human life and animal welfare is neither remote nor accidental. Ecological balance, public health, disease control, and environmental harmony are deeply interlinked with the welfare, preservation, and regulated management of animal species. The injury inflicted upon animals, their needless killing, or the destruction of their habitat, ultimately reverberates through the human condition itself. Thus, compassion towards animals is not merely a matter of sentiment; it is a constitutional necessity, an ecological imperative, and a marker of legal maturity. Accordingly, it may safely be observed that an animal, though not a constitutional "person" in the technical sense, is nonetheless a living being entitled to protection from unnecessary pain, suffering, torture, and arbitrary destruction. The law must, therefore, be interpreted and applied in a manner that preserves this minimum sphere of humane treatment, for to protect animal life from cruelty is, in essence, to affirm

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the moral seriousness of law, the constitutional value of life, and the civilizational duty of humankind.

12. A comparative overview of international practices concerning the management of stray dog populations, with the objective of drawing guidance from diverse regulatory models. It highlights that different jurisdictions adopt varying approaches depending upon their socio-legal priorities, public health concerns, and institutional capacities. While certain countries have historically relied upon capture and culling methods, others have progressively shifted towards humane and sustainable strategies such as sterilization, vaccination, public awareness, and community participation. This comparative analysis serves to demonstrate that effective stray dog management cannot be confined to a single rigid model, but must instead strike a careful balance between public safety and animal welfare, informed by evolving global standards and local exigencies.

13. In examining comparative international practices, it is observed that different jurisdictions adopt varying approaches based on local conditions and policy priorities. In Malaysia, the predominant method involves the capture and killing of stray dogs; however, this approach has attracted criticism for its ineffectiveness and lack of humane consideration. Consequently, animal welfare organizations advocate for more sustainable and humane alternatives, particularly the Trap-Neuter-Release-Manage strategy, coupled with public education and the development of adequately funded shelters. Local authorities operate under ministerial guidance, with institutional support for implementing such humane control mechanisms. In contrast, Turkey has historically adopted a more compassionate approach, mandating municipalities to capture, vaccinate, sterilize, and subsequently release stray animals back into their natural environment. Nevertheless, in response to increasing incidents and public safety concerns, recent legislative developments have introduced measures permitting

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removal of stray dogs from public spaces and, in limited circumstances, euthanasia of animals exhibiting aggressive behavior or suffering from incurable diseases, thereby reflecting a calibrated balance between public safety and animal welfare.

14. Indonesia presents a hybrid model wherein, despite the absence of specific legislation exclusively governing stray dogs, general legal provisions prohibit cruelty and abandonment. The control strategy is largely community driven, supported by animal welfare organizations, and includes feeding, sterilization, rehoming, and vaccination campaigns, particularly targeting rabies prevention. At the same time, culling of dangerous or diseased animals remains permissible under regulated conditions.

15. The situation in India illustrates the complexity of balancing public safety with animal rights. Judicial intervention has played a significant role, particularly in response to escalating incidents of dog bites and rabies risks. The Supreme Court of India initially directed comprehensive measures, including capture, sterilization, vaccination, and relocation of stray dogs to designated shelters, with a clear prohibition on their release back into public spaces. However, upon reconsideration and in light of practical constraints and public response, the court subsequently modified its stance, permitting the release of sterilized and vaccinated dogs while simultaneously regulating feeding practices and mandating designated areas for such activities. This reflects an evolving judicial approach seeking equilibrium between humane treatment and public safety imperatives. Overall, the policy material demonstrates that effective management of stray dog populations requires a multifaceted approach grounded in prevention, legal regulation, institutional coordination, and societal participation, while also drawing upon comparative experiences to inform a balanced and humane framework.

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16. The legal framework governing the management of stray animals in Pakistan is primarily decentralized, operating at the provincial level, whereby each province retains the authority to enact and enforce its own laws and regulations. There exists no uniform or comprehensive national legislation specifically addressing stray animal management. The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1890, continues to serve as the foundational statute in this domain; however, it is largely outdated and has not undergone substantial revision since its adoption in the pre-partition era. Although inherited by the provinces after independence, its practical application remains limited due to weak and inconsistent enforcement mechanisms. As a consequence of this fragmented legal structure, the responsibility for stray animal control has devolved upon provincial and local governments, resulting in divergent practices across different regions. These range from mass vaccination initiatives to unregulated killing programs, often lacking uniform standards or oversight. The absence of a central regulatory authority for animal welfare has further contributed to inconsistencies, including the use of measures such as poisoning alongside more structured approaches, such as Animal Birth Control programs and Capture, Vaccinate, Neuter, Release strategies, which have been implemented in certain urban centers. It is further observed that the absence of a single national authority has impeded the development of a cohesive, enforceable animal welfare regime, thereby complicating effective oversight and policy implementation. Notwithstanding these challenges, recent developments indicate a gradual shift towards strengthening animal welfare standards, including reforms introduced in 2022 that provide for enhanced penalties for acts of cruelty. However, such reforms remain fragmented and require consolidation within a comprehensive legislative framework specifically tailored to address the issue of stray animal management in a systematic and humane manner. The subsequent section introduces recent developments within the Islamabad Capital

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Territory, particularly concerning the operationalization of the Stray Dog Population Control Center at Tarlai and the directions issued by the Islamabad High Court, reflecting an emerging institutional response to public concerns regarding the proliferation of stray dogs and associated risks.

17. Article 5 of the Policy on Stray Dog Population Control in Islamabad (The Policy), in essence, lays down the conceptual and institutional architecture for the formulation of an effective, humane, and scientifically grounded dog population control regime. It does not merely provide administrative guidance; rather, it embodies a normative framework that obligates the concerned authorities to address the issue in a structured, evidence-based, and participatory manner. The requirement to form an advisory group composed of veterinarians, disease experts, public officials, environmental representatives, and members of civil society signals a clear move away from arbitrary decision-making toward informed decision making grounded in expert advice and consultation. It reflects the idea that complex issues, especially those involving public health and animal welfare, should not be addressed through one-sided or ad hoc actions, but through careful, collective consideration.

18. A careful reading of Article 5 of the policy further reveals that the policy recognizes the multifaceted nature of stray dog population dynamics. By mandating identification of sources of stray dogs, including unowned, abandoned, and freely roaming owned dogs, the provision underscores that the problem is not merely biological but is deeply intertwined with human behaviour, regulatory gaps, and societal practices. Thus, the policy moves beyond symptomatic treatment and instead requires the authorities to address the root causes, thereby ensuring the sustainability of any control measures adopted.

19. Equally significant is the emphasis placed upon scientific estimation of population size, distribution, and ecological factors, including the carrying

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capacity of the environment. This requirement introduces a rational and empirical dimension to policy implementation, ensuring that any intervention is proportionate, need-based, and aligned with ecological realities. It implicitly negates any arbitrary or excessive action, including indiscriminate killing, which may neither be effective nor lawful in the absence of data-driven justification.

20. The most critical component of Article 5 of the policy, however, lies in the mandate for the development of a comprehensive regulatory framework by the Metropolitan Corporation of Islamabad. This framework is envisaged to cover all essential aspects of dog population management, including registration and identification, vaccination, regulation of breeding and movement, control of dangerous dogs, environmental management, and imposition of animal welfare obligations. The breadth of this mandate makes it abundantly clear that the policy contemplates a rule-based system governed by enforceable standards, rather than discretionary or sporadic actions. In other words, Article 5 transforms the issue from one of mere administrative convenience into a matter of legal governance, requiring codified procedures, accountability, and institutional responsibility. Furthermore, the provision relating to the allocation of adequate resources, human, financial, technical, and infrastructural, demonstrates that the policy is not merely aspirational. It recognizes that effective implementation is contingent upon capacity and coordination, including partnerships among public institutions, private-sector actors, and civil society organizations. This integrated approach reflects modern governance principles, which favor collaborative mechanisms over isolated interventions.

21. Interpreted holistically, Article 5 embodies the principles of legality, proportionality, transparency, and humane treatment. It implicitly proscribes arbitrary actions such as indiscriminate killing of animals without a regulatory framework, scientific basis, or institutional oversight. Any deviation from the structured mechanism contemplated under this Article would not only defeat the

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object of the policy but would also run contrary to the broader constitutional ethos, particularly the right to life under Article 9 of the Constitution, as expansively interpreted to include protection against unnecessary pain and suffering inflicted upon living beings. Thus, Article 5 of the policy is not to be read as a mere enabling provision; rather, it constitutes the foundational pillar of the entire policy, requiring the authorities to act within a defined legal, scientific, and ethical framework. Failure to adhere to its mandate would render any action taken in the name of population control vulnerable to challenge on the touchstone of arbitrariness, lack of due process, and violation of established principles of humane governance. For the purpose of clearance and convenience, article 5 of the policy is reproduced as under :-

> "In the development of a dog population control programme, it is recommended that the competent authorities establish an advisory group or committee comprising veterinarians, experts in dog behaviour and zoonotic diseases, and representatives of relevant stakeholders, including local authorities, human health services, environmental control agencies, NGOs and members of the public. The purpose of such body shall be to analyse and quantify the problem, identify its underlying causes, assess public perception, and propose effective short-term and long-term strategies for its control.
>
> The policy further contemplates the following essential considerations:
>
> 1. **Identification of sources of stray dogs**, including unowned dogs reproducing freely, abandoned dogs and puppies resulting from uncontrolled breeding, and owned dogs allowed to roam without restraint.
> 2. **Assessment of population size, distribution and ecology**, through surveys, registers and scientific estimation methods, while taking into account environmental carrying capacity, availability of food, shelter, water, and prevailing human attitudes and behaviour.
> 3. **Development of a regulatory framework**, to be undertaken by the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad, encompassing:
>   - Registration and identification of dogs and licensing of breeders;
>   - Vaccination against rabies and other zoonotic diseases;
>   - Regulation of veterinary and surgical procedures;
>   - Control of movement of dogs at national and international levels;
>   - Regulation of dangerous dogs;
>   - Oversight of breeding and sale of dogs;
>   - Environmental control measures such as management of waste and food sources;

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- Establishment and regulation of shelters;
- Imposition of animal welfare obligations upon both owners and authorities.

4. **Provision of adequate resources** to implement the programme, including human resources, financial allocations, technical tools, infrastructure, cooperative mechanisms, and partnerships at public, private and inter-governmental levels.

22. Having examined the mandate of Article 5 in its true perspective, it becomes manifest that the respondents, particularly the Capital Development Authority, have failed to demonstrate even prima facie compliance with the essential requirements thereof. There is no material to indicate that a scientific assessment of the stray dog population, its sources, distribution, or ecological factors was ever undertaken. Likewise, no regulatory framework, as contemplated under Article 5, has been placed before this court, reflecting measures relating to registration, vaccination, sterilization, control of movement, or animal welfare standards. Although the learned counsel for the CDA has submitted that an amount of Rs. 19,000/- per dog is being incurred, such assertion, in the absence of any supporting record, documented policy instruments, standard operating procedures, or verifiable data, is insufficient to establish compliance with the statutory and policy obligations. The absence of any material reflecting structured implementation, institutional coordination, or allocation of resources in the manner required under Article 5 further reinforces the conclusion that the obligations cast by the policy have remained unfulfilled. In such circumstances, any action purportedly taken by the respondents, in the absence of compliance with the foundational safeguards embedded in Article 5, cannot be regarded as lawful, structured or sustainable, but rather appears to be arbitrary and devoid of the discipline of law.

23. Article 6 of the policy sets out the substantive measures to be implemented for controlling the stray dog population. It emphasizes a humane, scientific and multi-pronged approach, including promotion of responsible dog ownership through education and legislation, mandatory registration and

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identification of dogs, reproductive control through sterilization and other veterinary methods, humane capture, handling, housing and release or rehoming of dogs, vaccination programmes, environmental management to eliminate food sources, regulation of breeders and dealers, and reduction of dog bite incidents through public awareness. It further prescribes that euthanasia, where unavoidable, must be carried out strictly in accordance with humane and internationally accepted standards.

24. Article 4 of the policy lays down a comprehensive framework of responsibilities by clearly distributing functions among public authorities, veterinary institutions, private professionals, civil society, and dog owners, thereby reflecting a coordinated and multi-stakeholder approach to the management of the stray dog population in Islamabad Capital Territory. It places primary responsibility upon the Metropolitan Corporation of Islamabad, which is entrusted with the development and enforcement of all laws, rules.

25. The Livestock and Dairy Development Department is assigned a complementary role, particularly in the provision of veterinary healthcare services and in controlling zoonotic diseases such as rabies. Its responsibilities extend to rural areas through veterinary hospitals and mobile camps, thereby ensuring that disease prevention and animal health management are integral to the overall policy. The policy further recognizes the role of other government agencies, particularly environmental bodies, which may intervene where stray dogs pose environmental hazards, threaten wildlife, or spread disease. These agencies are empowered to regulate contributing factors such as waste management and access to human sewage, acknowledging that the stray dog population is often linked to environmental conditions rather than isolated causes. A significant role is also assigned to private sector veterinarians, who are not only responsible for treatment and advisory services but also act as a first line of detection for notifiable diseases such as rabies. They are required to follow

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prescribed procedures for reporting such cases and are actively involved in vaccination, sterilization, identification, and, where necessary, humane euthanasia. Their role also includes coordination with public authorities in cases of neglect or mismanagement of dogs. Non-governmental organizations and civil society are recognized as essential partners in the effective implementation of the policy. They contribute through public awareness, resource mobilization, technical expertise in handling and sterilization programs, and by promoting responsible dog ownership, thereby strengthening the social dimension of the regulatory framework.

26. The policy imposes clear obligations upon dog owners, requiring them to accept full responsibility for the welfare, health, and control of their animals. This includes ensuring vaccination, preventing uncontrolled breeding through sterilization, proper identification such as microchipping, and preventing dogs from roaming freely in a manner that may endanger the community or environment. Ownership is thus treated as a continuing legal and moral responsibility rather than a casual arrangement. Finally, the policy addresses ethical breeding by mandating that any breeding activity must be licensed and conducted responsibly, ensuring that animals are not subjected to unnecessary suffering or abandonment. In essence, Article 4 reflects a structured, humane, and legally balanced approach, emphasizing that stray dog management is not the function of a single authority but a shared responsibility requiring coordination, scientific planning, and adherence to principles of animal welfare and public health.

27. It is manifest that the unchecked proliferation of stray dogs within the Islamabad Capital Territory has assumed alarming proportions, posing a tangible threat to public safety, sanitation, and civic order. The persistence of this issue reflects the inadequacy of conventional and piecemeal measures, thereby necessitating the adoption of bold, innovative, and, indeed, revolutionary steps.

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Firstly, the cornerstone of any effective control mechanism lies in the adoption of a comprehensive Trap Neuter Vaccinate and Release regime. This approach, being internationally recognized, rests upon scientific population management rather than elimination. It ensures a gradual and sustained reduction in the stray dog population by interrupting the reproductive cycle, while simultaneously addressing public health concerns through vaccination. Such a method is not only humane but also demonstrably more effective than sporadic or reactionary measures, which fail to yield long-term results. Secondly, the act of catching or capturing stray dogs must be carried out in a humane and regulated manner. The trapping process should extend across residential sectors, commercial zones and public spaces, ensuring that no area remains neglected. The emphasis on humane capture reflects the State's obligation to act within the bounds of dignity and proportionality, avoiding cruelty while still addressing legitimate public concerns. An unregulated or forceful approach would not only be counterproductive but may also offend established principles of animal welfare. Thirdly, the process of neutering or sterilization constitutes the central pillar of population control. By preventing reproduction, the State effectively curtails the exponential growth of stray dogs, thereby addressing the root cause rather than merely its symptoms. This measure aligns with the principle of sustainable governance, whereby long term solutions are preferred over temporary or superficial interventions. Fourthly, vaccination, particularly against rabies, serves a dual purpose. It safeguards public health by minimizing the risk of zoonotic diseases and simultaneously enhances animal welfare. In this regard, vaccination programmes must be conducted on a wide scale and in a systematic manner, ensuring coverage of the maximum possible stray population. The failure to implement such measures would expose the public to avoidable risks, thereby implicating the State's duty to protect life. Fifthly, the release of sterilized and vaccinated dogs into designated areas is an essential component of ecological

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balance. Once treated, such animals are generally less aggressive and help prevent the influx of unneutered dogs into the same territory. This controlled reintroduction serves as a natural regulatory mechanism, maintaining equilibrium within the urban environment. It is, therefore, a measured response that harmonizes public safety with ecological considerations. Lastly, the establishment and expansion of dedicated facilities for stray dog management is indispensable. While the creation of a centralized control center represents a positive step, the magnitude of the issue necessitates the development of additional facilities, supported by adequate resources and institutional capacity. Collaboration with civil society organizations and non-governmental entities can further enhance outreach and effectiveness. Without such infrastructural support, even well-conceived policies risk remaining ineffective at the stage of implementation. Collectively, these measures reflect a coherent, humane, and legally sustainable framework, which the concerned authorities are required to implement in letter and spirit to address the issue in a meaningful and enduring manner.

28. With regard to animals that are critically ill, severely injured, or pose a confirmed rabid threat, the principle of humane euthanasia must be recognized as a necessary, albeit limited, intervention. Such a measure, when carried out strictly by trained veterinary professionals, is justified on the touchstone of preventing prolonged suffering and safeguarding public health. However, it must be unequivocally emphasized that euthanasia cannot be employed as a substitute for population control; its use must remain confined to exceptional circumstances, lest it degenerate into an arbitrary and impermissible practice.

29. The issue of environmental and public health management forms the backbone of any sustainable solution. It is evident that improper waste disposal in residential areas, commercial zones, and particularly in the vicinity of food establishments constitutes a primary source of sustenance for stray dogs, thereby

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accelerating their population growth. The failure to regulate waste management reflects an administrative lapse, and unless rectified through strict enforcement and systemic reforms, any effort at population control would remain ineffective. The regulation of feeding practices is essential to maintaining urban order and public safety. While compassion towards animals is to be encouraged, unregulated feeding in residential streets and commercial areas contributes to the congregation of stray dogs and increases the risk of human-animal conflict. It is, therefore, necessary that feeding be confined to designated locations and times under a regulated framework, and any violation thereof be subjected to lawful penalties, thereby ensuring discipline without undermining humane considerations. The presence and movement of stray dogs in densely populated public spaces require careful regulation. Once processed through designated control centers, such animals must not be permitted to roam freely in residential areas, parks, or other public places where their presence may pose a risk to citizens. This measure is essential to strike a balance between ecological considerations and the paramount need to protect human life and safety. The establishment of an efficient and comprehensive garbage collection and disposal system across all residential sectors is indispensable. Proper sanitation infrastructure not only addresses broader civic concerns but also directly contributes to controlling the stray dog population by eliminating accessible food sources. This reflects the principle that environmental governance and animal control are intrinsically interconnected. Coordinated engagement with commercial stakeholders, particularly hotels, restaurants, and meat markets, is necessary to ensure that food waste is managed in a manner that does not remain accessible to stray animals. Regulatory oversight in this regard is essential, as commercial negligence in waste handling significantly contributes to the problem and undermines public policy objectives. The enhancement of public health infrastructure, particularly the availability of anti-rabies vaccines for

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humans, is of critical importance. Ensuring an adequate and uninterrupted supply of such vaccines in public hospitals is a constitutional imperative, directly linked to the protection of life. In the short term, this measure serves as an essential safeguard for individuals exposed to dog bites. Lastly, community engagement and public education emerge as vital components of a long-term and sustainable solution. A shift in societal attitudes, achieved through structured awareness campaigns, is necessary to foster responsible behavior towards stray animals. Educating residents regarding the benefits of the Catch, Neuter, Vaccinate, and Release program not only promotes acceptance of humane control methods but also encourages community participation, thereby reinforcing the effectiveness of policy implementation. Collectively, these measures reflect a holistic and legally sustainable framework, which, if implemented with sincerity and institutional commitment, is capable of addressing the issue in a balanced, humane, and enduring manner

30. There is a pressing need for the concerned authorities, including CDA, MCI, and DMA, in collaboration with civil society organizations and representatives of the local population, to undertake a comprehensive, area-wise survey of the stray dog population within Islamabad Capital Territory. Accurate data collection is the foundation of any effective policy intervention; without a reliable assessment of the scale and distribution of the issue, remedial measures remain speculative and incapable of achieving meaningful results. The involvement of civil society and non-governmental organizations is indispensable in the formulation and execution of an effective framework. Such organizations possess the requisite experience in animal welfare, including rescue, sheltering, and adoption, and their collaboration with the State enhances both the reach and credibility of policy measures. A coordinated approach between public authorities and civil society ensures that the adopted strategies are not only effective but also compassionate and socially acceptable. The

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establishment of a dedicated and accessible complaint redressal mechanism, such as a twenty four hour helpline, is essential for timely intervention. Such a facility would enable residents to report instances of aggressive or rabid animals, thereby facilitating prompt and humane response by the authorities. This mechanism would also discourage individuals from resorting to unlawful or cruel methods, ensuring that all actions remain within the framework of law and humane standards.Collectively, these measures underscore a transition from reactive governance to a proactive, data-driven, and participatory model, essential to addressing stray dogs in a lawful and humane manner.

31. In light of the above discussion, policy framework, and directions, these petitione are disposed of with the following directions:

32. The respondents, particularly the Metropolitan Corporation of Islamabad, Capital Development Authority, ICT Administration, Livestock and Dairy Development Department, Islamabad Wildlife Management Board, Environmental Protection Agency, and all other concerned public functionaries, shall deal with the issue of stray dog population strictly within the framework of the Stray Dog Population Control Policy for ICT. No action shall be taken in an arbitrary, ad hoc, or inhumane manner, nor shall any campaign of poisoning, shooting, or indiscriminate killing of stray dogs be carried out, except where a duly qualified veterinarian certifies, in writing, that an animal is rabid, incurably diseased, dangerously aggressive, or otherwise required to be euthanized in accordance with humane veterinary standards. The respondents shall give full effect to Articles 4, 5, and 6 of the policy by ensuring registration, identification, vaccination, sterilization, humane capture, proper housing, release or rehoming, public education, responsible pet ownership, regulation of breeding, control of movement, and prevention of abandonment. These measures shall be undertaken through a coordinated institutional mechanism involving veterinarians, zoonotic disease experts, public authorities, environmental

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agencies, NGOs, and civil society representatives, as contemplated by the policy itself.

33. The respondents are further directed to place on record and maintain a complete and verifiable record of all dogs captured, treated, vaccinated, sterilized, released, rehomed, kept at the Stray Dog Population Control Center, or euthanized, together with veterinary certificates, dates, locations, and reasons for each action. The respondents shall also prepare and notify standard operating procedures for capture, transportation, treatment, sheltering, vaccination, sterilization, and release of stray dogs. They shall ensure that lactating, collared, vaccinated, sterilized, or healthy community dogs are not removed from their locality except for lawful and recorded reasons. The amount allegedly spent per dog shall also be supported by a documentary record, an audit trail, and a transparent accounting mechanism.

34. The competent authority shall constitute or activate the advisory committee contemplated under the policy, consisting of representatives of MCI, CDA, ICT Administration, Livestock Department, IWMB, EPA, qualified veterinarians, experts in zoonotic diseases, animal welfare organizations, and civil society. The committee shall periodically review the implementation of the policy, prepare a database on dog bites and rabies prevention, monitor vaccination and sterilization progress, and recommend measures to enhance public awareness and responsible ownership. The committee shall also ensure that the One Health approach is adopted so that public health, environmental protection, and animal welfare are addressed together, rather than in isolation.

35. The respondents are directed to adopt and implement, in letter and spirit, a coordinated and scientifically grounded mechanism for control of the stray dog population within Islamabad Capital Territory by ensuring a robust Catch, Neuter, Vaccinate and Release programme through humane capture, systematic

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sterilization and wide scale vaccination, followed by controlled release in designated areas so as to maintain ecological balance.

36. To establish and expand dedicated and adequately resourced facilities in collaboration with civil society organizations for sheltering, treatment and adoption; to ensure that euthanasia is resorted to strictly as a limited and exceptional measure, confined only to critically ill, severely injured or rabid animals and carried out by qualified veterinary professionals.

37. To enforce an effective waste management regime by ensuring proper garbage collection and disposal across all residential and commercial areas, including strict regulation of food waste generated by hotels, restaurants and meat markets so as to eliminate accessible food sources.

38. To regulate feeding of stray animals by confining the same to designated places and times in accordance with law; to restrict the roaming of stray dogs in densely populated public places after processing through control centres; to ensure availability of anti rabies vaccines in all public health facilities as a matter of public safety.

39. To promote responsible pet ownership by regulating spaying and neutering of domestic animals.

40. To undertake a comprehensive and authentic area wise survey of the stray dog population for informed policy formulation; to launch sustained public awareness campaigns regarding humane management and ecological significance of community animals.

41. To actively engage non governmental organizations for rescue, sheltering and adoption initiatives; and to establish a round the clock complaint redressal mechanism enabling citizens to report aggressive or rabid animals for prompt and humane intervention, so that the issue is addressed through a coherent, humane and legally sustainable framework.

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42. The respondents shall submit a compliance report before the Deputy Registrar judicial of this court within a period of sixty days, showing the steps taken for implementation of the policy, formulation of SOPs, constitution of the committee, record keeping mechanism, vaccination and sterilization program, and public awareness measures.

43. In view of the above, the instant petition as well as Writ Petition no.177 of 2026 are disposed of in the above terms.

(KHADIM HUSSAIN SOOMRO)
JUDGE

Announced in open court on 28.04.2026.

JUDGE

APPROVED FOR REPORTING
Niqab M

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