

Russian Court Bans Euthanasia of Stray Animals Unless They Threaten Humans

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A dog. **Moskva News Agency**

Russia's Constitutional Court has banned the euthanasia of stray animals unless they pose a direct threat to humans, state media [reported](#) Thursday.

"Killing animals without owners is an extraordinary measure, which is justified only when others cannot ensure an adequate level of protection of a person, their rights and freedoms and public safety," Russia's Constitutional Court said in its ruling.

The court said overcrowded shelters and cost-cutting measures cannot serve as grounds to euthanize animals, according to the state-run RIA Novosti news agency.

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Following a series of fatal attacks on people by stray dogs, President Vladimir Putin [signed](#) a

law last July that gave regional governments the authority to establish their own rules for handling stray animals — including allowing for their euthanization as a form of population control.

Animal rights activists and volunteers [told](#) The Moscow Times that the law would lead to mass euthanization and inhumane killings of stray animals without addressing the root causes of Russia's stray animal problem.

Around that time, authorities in Far East Russia's republic of Buryatia announced that stray dogs would be put down if they were not found a new home within a designated timeframe.

Animal rights activists challenged those rules and Buryatia's Constitutional Court asked Russia's Constitutional Court to rule on the constitutionality of the regional law.

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