

# *SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS*



8 November 2017

Mr Mathew Pereira  
Forum Editor  
The Straits Times

Dear Mr Pereira,

I refer to the article (S.T. 19 Oct 2017), “Man jailed 20 months for animal cruelty that led to two dogs dying”. It was a shocking and distressing read. What the offender did was horrific, causing unimaginable suffering and torture to the animals. Thankfully, he was identified and brought to justice.

In addition to the jail sentence, the offender was prohibited from keeping a pet for 12 months, the maximum ban under the law. The prohibition order was included during the most recent amendments to the Animals and Birds Act, and the SPCA applauds the authorities for adding this important element to animal cruelty sentencing.

This case however, brings to light that a 12 month ban on pet ownership is insufficient for particularly heinous acts. The offender had abandoned his pet poodle after dragging him down multiple flights of stairs causing traumatic injuries. It was also reported that he had neglected to seek treatment for another male toy poodle under his charge, also leading to its death.

In SPCA’s opinion, in cases of extreme and aggravated acts of cruelty, the law should allow for a life ban, or, in the absence of such, a discretion on the court’s part to decide on a longer ban.

In the absence of 24-hour monitoring which is impractical, it would be potentially hazardous for any future pets to be put under the charge of such a perpetrator, who has more than demonstrated his propensity for extreme violence and a total lack of empathy.

Singapore’s animal protection laws have been updated and improved in recent years. We urge the authorities to further strengthen them in this instance, to prevent further extreme acts against the vulnerable and defenceless animals in our society.

Yours sincerely,

Jaipal Singh Gill (Dr)  
Executive Director  
Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals