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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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June 10, 2016

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry,

I am writing to strongly urge you to condemn the Dog Meat Festival in Yulin, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China, and urge an end to the dog meat trade, not only in China, but worldwide. The dog meat festival is scheduled to commence on June 21, 2016. This festival was launched by dog meat traders as a commercial enterprise to boost flagging sales of dog meat. More than 10,000 dogs are reportedly captured, transported and slaughtered every year for the festival, with more than 10 million dogs killed annually in China for the dog meat trade. Yulin's dog slaughter takes place in residential areas and public marketplaces, imposing scenes of extreme animal cruelty on local residents, including young children who may, as a result, suffer psychological trauma and desensitization.

Animal welfare groups have found that a number of these dogs are stolen pets taken from their homes, still wearing their collars when they reach the slaughterhouse to be brutally killed. These dogs suffer mentally from watching other dogs being disemboweled and blow-torched in front of them. This horrific practice is completely unacceptable. I adamantly oppose these horrendous acts, and believe through diligent diplomatic pressure, it can be stopped.

Although the Yulin city government withdrew as a sponsor of the Dog Meat Festival, it has taken no meaningful action to enforce China's existing laws and regulations on animal disease control, food safety, trans-provincial dog transport, or youth protection, all of which are breached by the dog meat trade. Millions of people have called upon the government and Party Secretary, as well as the Mayor of Yulin to prohibit this cruel treatment of dogs in China. I proudly and unequivocally joined this call, when I introduced a bipartisan resolution, H. Res.752, Condemning China's Yulin Dog Meat Festival and calling on the Chinese Government to end the dog meat trade. In addition, I have written to Ambassador Cui Tiankai and the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress' Chairman Zhang Dejiang, urging them to take action to end the Yulin festival.

While I applaud the efforts of the Yulin city government, I am pleading with you to take these efforts a step further by condemning this festival and the dog meat trade. I respect the traditions of China, but these events and activities tarnish China's reputation across the world. For these reasons, I urge your immediate attention to this critically important issue.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my request, and I respectfully look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alcee L. Hastings". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress