



September 19, 2019

The Honorable Michael Pompeo
Secretary of State
United States Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

On behalf of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) and our more than two million supporters nationwide, I'm writing in regard to the recent report by the State Department's Office of Inspector General (OIG) titled "Evaluation of the Antiterrorism Assistance Explosive Detection Canine Program – Health and Welfare." The ASPCA commends the OIG for investigating the complaints of animal cruelty that led to this report. We now urge the State Department to immediately adopt the OIG's recommendations to better ensure the proper welfare and treatment of dogs in the Explosive Detection Canine Program (EDCP) and to cease the program immediately until those recommendations are implemented.

Explosive detection dogs work tirelessly to keep Americans at home and abroad safe, often in dangerous situations. When the United States government trains dogs for these duties, it bears a responsibility to ensure the dogs' physiological and behavioral needs are fully met and that no cruel practices are used in raising, training, and caring for them. This includes U.S. animals provided to foreign partners as well as animals retired from official service.

The recent OIG report on the EDCP uncovered unconscionable treatment of detector dogs deployed in Jordan – at least 10 of whom died from medical problems from 2008 through 2016 – and around the world. Inspectors observed skinny, malnourished dogs, dogs infested with ticks, and dogs living in filthy kennels. These conditions would

constitute criminal animal cruelty in most U.S. jurisdictions and are unacceptable for any dog, certainly working dogs trained at the expense of American taxpayers.

Until the recommendations of the OIG report are fully implemented – at a minimum – and the State Department takes appropriate responsibility for the humane treatment and welfare of detector dogs trained by the U.S. government for service abroad, the ASPCA asks the Department of State to suspend the EDCP.

The ASPCA is committed to helping these animals any way we can, and I offer our considerable assistance in rehoming dogs in the program who need to be retrieved or retired to protect and sustain their health and welfare.

We also offer our expertise in veterinary care, animal sheltering, and behavioral rehabilitation to assist the State Department with the development and review of strategic welfare plans and standards for U.S. dogs deployed to Jordan and other countries.

Thank you for your attention to this alarming issue and your consideration of our offer to help. We look forward to your department's swift and compassionate response to the OIG's report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Bershadker".

Matt Bershadker
President and Chief Executive Officer
American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals