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BAHIJAH ANIMALS ARRIVE IN ISRAEL TO MEET THEIR FATE

After more than three months in transit, the 14,000+ Australian animals on board the MV Bahijah have arrived in Israel.

14,000 sheep and 2,000 cattle first left Fremantle on 5 January, and about 13,700 sheep and 550 cattle endured the second attempt to reach the Middle East.

Stop Live Exports spokesperson Rebecca Tapp said the tragedy represented more than mortality rates and was additional proof that the live export trade is inherently risky.

“The animals were sent into a known conflict zone,” she said.

“They were then ordered to return to Australia where they languished off the coast of WA during extreme heat.

“There were over 80 reported deaths, before the animals that were deemed most likely to survive another voyage were exposed to 35 more days at sea, around the treacherous Cape of Good Hope.”

Ms Tapp said even if not visible, the animals would be suffering from fatigue and the cumulative effects of two back-to-back ‘extended long haul’ voyages.

“The animals have been subjected to prolonged stress and fatigue after being confined in their own waste and enduring 24/7 engine noise and lighting, heatwaves, rough seas and multiple changes to their environment and diet.

“And the worst is still to come. After all this, the animals now face fully conscious slaughter – including the use of full inversion slaughter boxes for the cattle, which are banned in Australia, the USA, UK and parts of Europe due to the extreme suffering they cause.

“Every aspect of the live export trade is cruel and inhumane.”

Ms Tapp said the trade was unfixable and urged the Federal Government to legislate the date to end live sheep export by sea during this term of parliament.

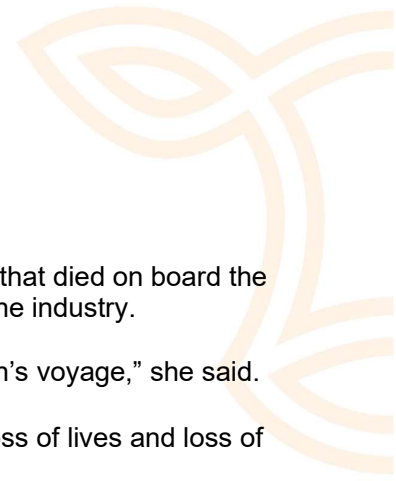
“Exporters can’t be trusted to do the right thing,” she said.

“Instead of ending the animals’ suffering after the first failed journey, they chose to re-export them all over again, in the longest approved trip in live export history.

“They dismissed the pleas of the outraged Australian community who rallied for them to prioritise animal welfare over profit.

“They ignored calls from 12 leading animal welfare organisations to voluntarily suspend further shipments to the Red Sea while the risk of Houthi attacks continue.

“Animal welfare was not a primary consideration.”



Ms Tapp said exporters' deliberate gross under-reporting of the 151 Australian cattle that died on board the Brahman Express last month further cemented the lack of trust and transparency in the industry.

"This leads us to question the validity of any reports released in relation to the Bahijah's voyage," she said.

"The trade has a long history of ongoing regulatory breaches, lack of transparency, loss of lives and loss of social licence."

She said the overwhelming majority of Australians support the Federal Government's policy to phase out live sheep exports by sea and that the Bahijah catastrophe highlighted the urgency around setting the end date for the trade.

"There is no good reason for the Federal Government to delay legislating the ban they promised to implement before they were elected," she said.

"It's time to stop trading in cruelty and transition to a more humane alternative.

"The animals aren't the only ones suffering from fatigue. Australians are tired of our animals being treated badly."

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