



Sir Mark Rowley QPM  
Commissioner  
Metropolitan Police

Via e-mail: [mark.rowley@met.police.uk](mailto:mark.rowley@met.police.uk)

26 September 2024

Dear Sir Mark:

Greetings from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). We know it's been a challenging time for police forces across the country, which have in recent months admirably protected the public from hateful, violent extremists. As we understand things, the Metropolitan Police is looking to change approaches when tackling such violence, and we're writing today to encourage you to phase out the use of dogs, who, unlike human officers, did not choose to enlist or put their lives on the line.

Concerns for these animals' well-being have been highlighted during the violent clashes this year in Southport and elsewhere. Ike and Zoe, dogs used by Merseyside Police, were hit by bricks thrown by the unruly crowd, and a third dog, Quga – who was bitten and strangled by an offender while on duty in July – sustained further injuries when her back leg was burned during the riots. In Staffordshire, a dog named Vixen sustained a gash on her right eye when a rioter hurled a brick at her. Over the years, we have also read reports of dogs who have been punched or kicked or whose eyes have been gouged during altercations.

In addition to the risk of injury while working, dogs used by the police are vulnerable because too often, their well-being comes second to other priorities. In June 2019, two dogs were left in a hot car for over two and a half hours while their handling officers underwent training, resulting in the collapse and death of a 5-year-old Belgian Malinois named Ivy.

The continuous "restocking" of these dogs also adds to the UK's already considerable homeless-animal crisis. Each year, hundreds of puppies are bred into existence to be used by the police – the West Midlands Police programme alone holds 40 females and produces about 100 puppies annually – but not all dogs find work. Northumbria Police notes that some puppies under 18 months old have health or behavioural concerns that prevent them from graduating training. These animals, as well as dogs retired from the force who are unable to find a permanent home with their former handler, must then be rehomed – in competition with the over 100,000 homeless dogs in the UK at any given time.

With more technology at our disposal than ever before, there's no need to continue to use dogs – or any animal – to maintain law and order. Now is the time to make a change. Please, begin phasing out animals from police service.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Elisa Allen  
Vice President of Programmes  
PETA

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