

Activists Evacuate Dogs From Russia's Buryatia Over Euthanization Law

By [Moscow Times Reporter](#)

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Animal rights activists in the Far East Russian republic of Buryatia have been evacuating stray dogs to other regions of the country after the republic legalized the euthanization of homeless animals in certain conditions.

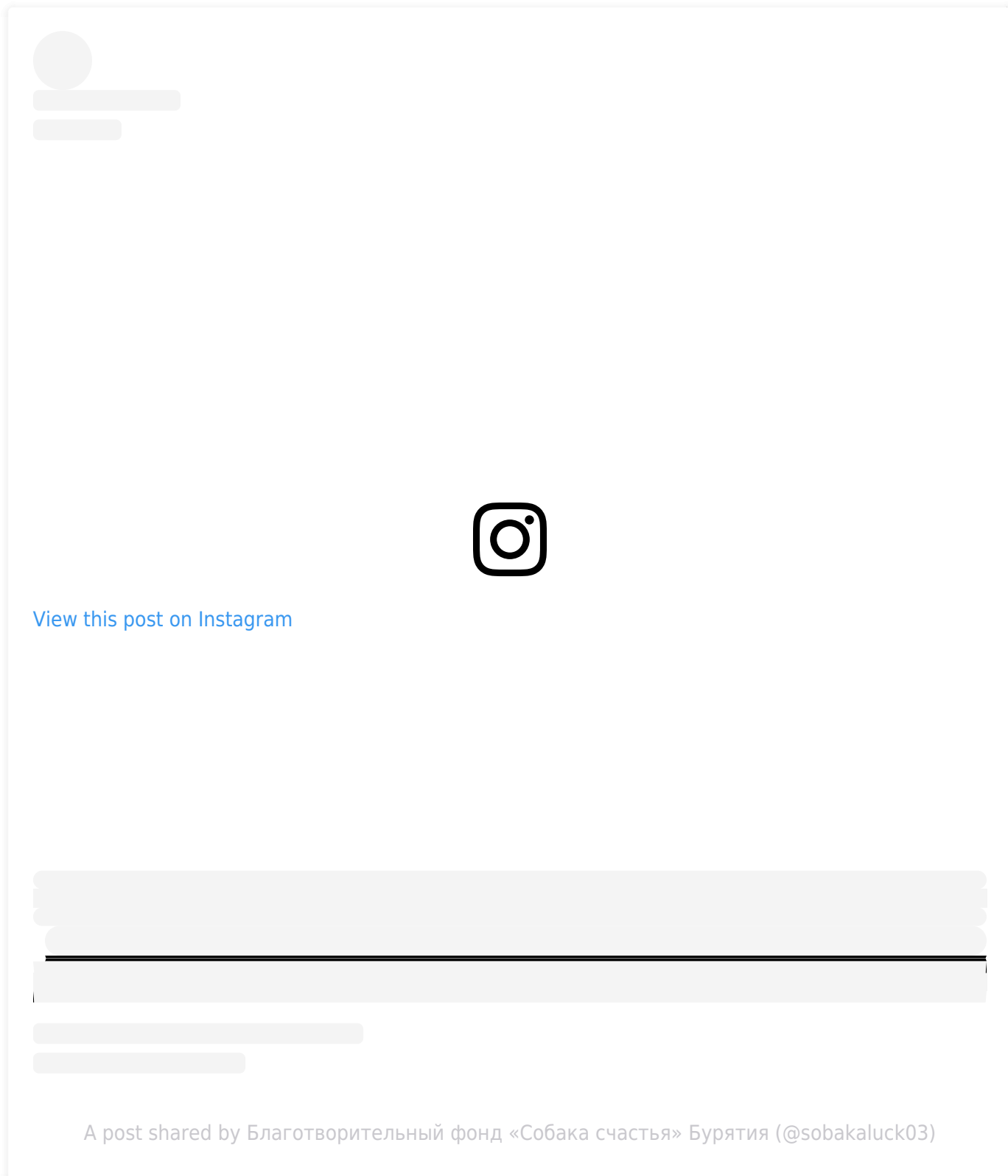
At least 600 dogs have already been evacuated to safe locations, but hundreds more are still awaiting evacuation, local animal rights activist Nargiza Muminova told The Moscow Times.

“There are currently about 2,000 dogs left in our shelter,” said Muminova, a volunteer at the [Ananda](#) dog shelter in the Buryatia capital of Ulan-Ude.

Last year, President Vladimir Putin [signed](#) a law granting Russia's regions the authority to establish their own rules for handling homeless animals — including allowing their euthanization.

In November, the parliament of Buryatia [passed](#) legislation that says that stray dogs in the region will be put in shelters for a certain period set by the regional authorities. If they are not adopted or claimed by their owners within that time, they may be euthanized.

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According to the law, euthanasia is permitted in cases when an animal is terminally ill or has a dangerous disease, if a dog has attacked people, or if the animal has not been claimed by an

owner within 30 calendar days. Stray microchipped animals will be sent to a shelter for a 60-day period.

Though shelters can keep dogs for as long as they want at their own expense, activists warn that this is impossible without the government's help — and state funding for the captured dogs was ended last year.

On Wednesday, Buryatia's veterinary department put to death 18 dogs at the Ananda dog shelter, Muminova said.

"Although we provided food, water, and shelter for the animals on our own, they were officially documented as municipal property," Muminova said, which means that the local veterinary department had the right to dispose of the dogs.

Related article: ['Death Sentence': Russia Passes Law Permitting Euthanization of Stray Animals](#)

Activists said that in addition to the evacuation efforts, they are working on registering the remaining shelter dogs as the property of volunteers and shelter employees to save them from euthanasia.

"Another challenging thing for now is finding suitable caretakers for evacuated dogs," Daria Zaitseva, the head of the dog shelter [Sobaka Schast'ya](#) (Dog of Happiness), told The Moscow Times. "They must be reasonable, compassionate people or dedicated volunteers committed to providing foster care."

Sobaka Schast'ya has already evacuated 133 dogs to safe regions.

In addition to Buryatia, the republic of [Altai](#) adopted a law allowing euthanization of homeless animals last month and lawmakers in the Zabaikalsky region [voted in favor](#) of similar legislation.

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