



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **3,000 Cattle Loaded on Ship in Walvis Bay Without Independent Welfare Observation – SPCA Namibia Warns of Severe Welfare Risks in Sea-Transported Livestock**

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) is gravely concerned by the event of 22 March 2026, when 3,000 head of cattle were loaded onto a ship in Walvis Bay and staff were expelled from the docking site, denying SPCA Windhoek and Walvis Bay and other animal-welfare representatives the opportunity to witness the loading process and the welfare status of the animals. This lack of support to allow independent oversight raises serious welfare, and accountability questions, and undermines public trust in the humane treatment of animals in transit.

#### **Key Concerns**

##### **A. Negative Impacts of Livestock Shipping**

###### **1. Animal welfare impact**

- Stress and injury: Loading, confinement, dehydration, heat stress, rough handling, and stowage in inadequate conditions cause suffering and illness.
- Mortality risk: Higher risk of death during long journeys due to stress, disease, or injuries.
- In-transit medical needs: Limited access to veterinary care, feed, or water can worsen health outcomes.

###### **2. Environmental impacts**

- Animal waste and spillage: Transport vessels and trucks can release manure and urine, contaminating water and soil along Namibia's coastline and at Walvis Bay port.



- Greenhouse gas emissions: Shipping live animals and the associated refrigeration and handling require energy, contributing to CO2 and other greenhouse gases.
- Biosecurity and invasive risks: Live animal transport can spread diseases, parasites, and pests between regions, impacting ecosystems and farming systems.

## **B. Transparency and Animal Welfare Oversight**

1. **Animal welfare oversight denied:** Independent observation is a cornerstone of responsible transport. Denying welfare observers inhibits verification of the wellbeing of the animals.
2. **Transparency concerns:** The docking of an animal transport ship in Walvis Bay was kept quiet, unlike the announcements for passenger cruisers and others. When welfare oversight is rejected, accountability for potential neglect, distress, or injuries becomes vague.
3. **Preference for in-country slaughter:** Reducing long-distance live transport, especially where welfare observers are precluded from access, aligns with broader ethical and welfare objectives. In-country slaughter (Namibia), when done under stringent welfare standards, can mitigate stress and risk to animals during transport.
  - Moreover, local slaughter can create local jobs across the value chain (e.g., slaughtering facilities, processing, cold storage, transportation, and ancillary services), contributing to regional economic activity and wage opportunities.

### **The SPCA's position and call to action**

- Improved access to welfare oversight: We call on the responsible authorities, port authorities, ship operators, to support the SPCA in gaining access and accredited welfare representatives to witness loading, voyage readiness, and in-transit welfare checks.

### **What this means for stakeholders**

- For the public and consumers: Recognise the ethical implications of live-animal transport and advocate for continued improvements in animal welfare, traceability, and accountability.
- For port authorities and regulators: Establish and enforce clear, transparent access for welfare observers; publish import/export permits, health certificates, and inspection outcomes.
- For shipping lines and operators: Integrate welfare-centric loading protocols, environmental controls, emergency procedures, and third-party audits as standard practice.

The SPCA remains committed to the humane treatment of all animals and will pursue all lawful avenues to ensure that their welfare is protected, visible, and verifiable at every stage of transport. We will work with governments, industry bodies, and communities to promote



humane livestock movement, including prioritising in-country slaughter to reduce unnecessary suffering in transit.

The standards we would like to see implemented can be found here:

[https://www.woah.org/fileadmin/Home/eng/Health\\_standards/tahc/2018/en\\_chapitre\\_aw\\_sea\\_transpt.htm](https://www.woah.org/fileadmin/Home/eng/Health_standards/tahc/2018/en_chapitre_aw_sea_transpt.htm)

**Please remember: These animals cannot speak for themselves. The SPCA stands as their voice, insisting that every creature, even those facing slaughter, deserves humane treatment and proper care.**

For more information, contact:

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