



PEOPLE FOR  
THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT  
OF ANIMALS  
  
PETA  
DEUTSCHLAND E.V.

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Info@peta.de  
PETA.de

February 28, 2019

To the  
Municipality of Rafah

Via email: [rbaladya@murafah.ps](mailto:rbaladya@murafah.ps)

Dear Sir or Madam,

I'm contacting you on behalf of PETA Deutschland e.V., Germany's largest animal rights organisation. I am writing with grave concerns regarding the health and welfare of a young lioness named Falestine at the Rafah zoo after viewing a [video](#) depicting the animal being declawed at this facility. According to [international media](#), Falestine was subjected to the abusive procedure so that she could be handled more safely by members of the public in an attempt to attract visitors to the zoo. Declawing is unquestionably cruel, and does not mitigate the dire risks of engaging in direct contact with large predators such as lions. Please take all available legal action, up to and including confiscating the animals at the Rafah Zoo, working with NGO's to ensure placement at appropriate facilities, and permanently closing the zoo.

Extensive literature reviews ([here](#) and [here](#)) document that declawing cats is a painful procedure that is associated with serious complications and long-term health consequences. Declawing involves the amputation of the third toe bone and its associated claw. Some of the most commonly reported medical complications include excessive bleeding, severe infection, abscess formation, draining tracts, tendon contracture, and chronic lameness. Felids often suffer long term debilitating lameness and pain, ultimately requiring paw repair [surgery](#) so they are able to ambulate somewhat normally again. The procedure performed on Falestine appeared to take place at the zoo without proper aseptic technique or anesthesia, which would not only cause her to experience extreme pain and distress, but also greatly increases the chances that she will develop a life-threatening or chronic complication.

The removal of claws also compromises the long term welfare of felids since they use them for normal behaviors such as climbing, scratching, scraping, play behavior, and manipulating food or toys. Big cats in captivity retain their predatory instincts and use their claws to scratch and grasp items as they would in the wild.

**PETA Weltweit**

- PETA UK
- PETA US
- PETA France
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA India
- PETA Australia
- PETA Asia-Pacific
- PETA Latino
- Animal Rahat

**Spendenkonto**

GLS Gemeinschaftsbank eG  
Konto: 78000 78000  
BLZ: 430 609 67  
IBAN: DE71 43060967 7800078000  
BIC: GENODEM1GLS

Als gemeinnützig und besonders  
förderungswürdig anerkannt.  
Eingetragen im Vereinsregister beim  
Amtsgericht Stuttgart, VR 202128.



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For these reasons, German animal welfare law prohibits declawing of wild and exotic cats, as does United States Department of Agriculture [policy](#). The American Veterinary Medical Association has issued a [position statement](#) condemning the declawing of wild and exotic cats. Just last year, federal court in the United States issued a consent order declaring that declawing endangered or threatened cats when not medically necessary violates the U.S. Endangered Species Act.

Furthermore, declawing a wild felid will not protect the public from serious injury or death during direct contact, since felids can inflict powerful, unpredictable, and unprovoked bite wounds. There have been numerous [documented accounts](#) of declawed big cat attacks on people, which have resulted in disfiguring injuries, severing of limbs, and bite wounds to the neck and skull. Some of these attacks resulted in fatalities, and often occurred without any warning. The animals often pay with their lives too, sometimes being shot on site.

Please immediately take legal action to ensure the welfare of Palestine and all other animals at the Rafah zoo, including confiscating animals, working with appropriate NGO's to arrange the placement of animals at reputable facilities, and permanently closing the zoo. May we hear from you as soon as possible regarding this urgent matter?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,

Dr Yvonne Würz

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PETA Deutschland e.V.  
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