

# French president urged to show some jumbo love

December 14 2012

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A French circus owner Friday urged President Francois Hollande to save the lives of two zoo elephants that city officials want to put down because they have tuberculosis.

Gilbert Edelstein, the head of the Pinder circus who donated the two pachyderms Nepal and Baby to the Parc de la Tete d'Or in Lyon, sought the "supreme intervention" of Hollande in a letter.

The mayor's office had ordered euthanasia, citing public health concerns, and said it should be carried out before December 20.

"I appeal to your wisdom as this terrible decision is not justified," Edelstein wrote. He claimed the diagnosis of TB was disputed.

City authorities had said the pair pose a threat to other animals at the zoo, located in the heart of Lyon, as well as human visitors since the disease is highly contagious.

"We are sad for the animals but we cannot take the risk of the infection spreading to citizens," said Jean-Louis Touraine from the mayor's office.

"When I gave them my elephants they were perfectly healthy. If they have contracted [tuberculosis](#), it's from the other animals," Edelstein said.

"I want them to be treated and returned to me," he added.

Both [elephants](#) are in their forties and could live for another two decades.

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