

# Jaguar used in Olympic torch event killed in Brazil

June 22 2016

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The organisers of the Rio Games have apologised for using a "chained wild animal" in an Olympic Torch ceremony after the jaguar, called Juma, had to be shot dead when he escaped

A jaguar trotted out for the Olympic torch's passage through Brazil's Amazon was killed shortly afterward when it escaped its handlers and threatened a vet, the Brazilian military said Tuesday.

The feline—whose species is the symbol of the Amazon—was shot dead

in the northern city of Manaus on Monday soon after it was photographed with the torch passing by. An attempt to use tranquilizer darts on it failed.

"It escaped and ran off as it was being moved from one area to another in the zoo," said Colonel Luiz Gustavo Evelyn, whose unit is deployed in the region.

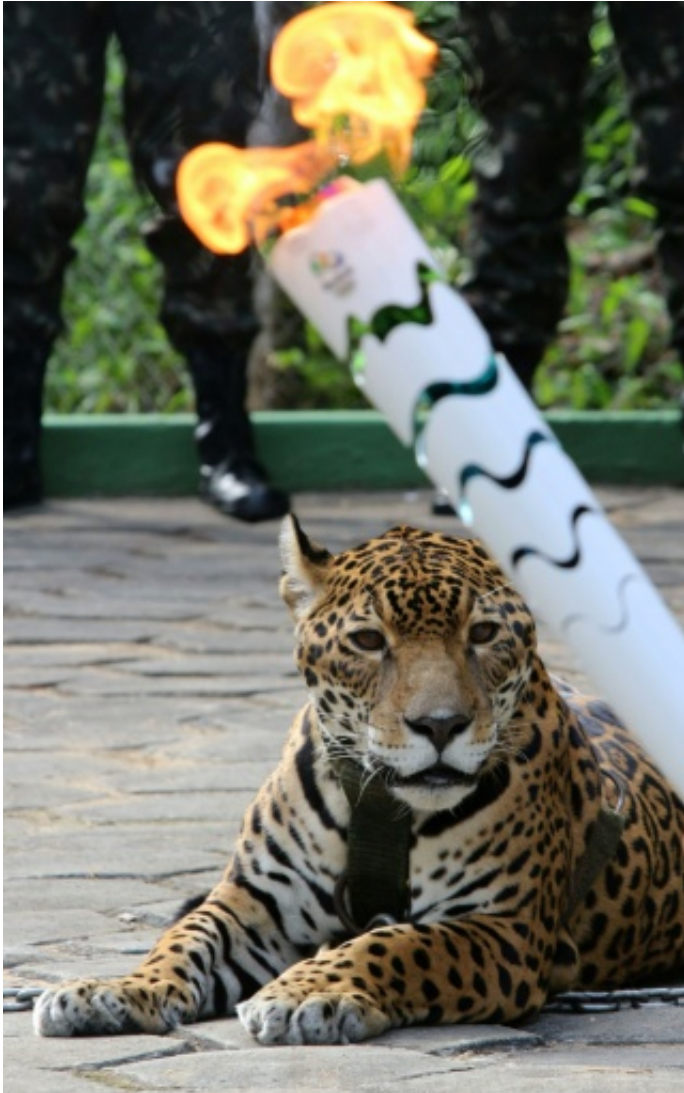
He explained that, once located, the jaguar was hit by four tranquilizer darts. But they did not slow it down and it turned on a veterinarian, forcing the soldiers to use bullets.

"To protect the handler, it was sacrificed," Evelyn said.

The organizing committee of the Rio Games said it was "very unhappy" about the jaguar's killing.

"We erred by allowing the Olympic torch, a symbol of peace and union among people, to be displayed next to a chained [wild animal](#). That contradicts our beliefs and values," the committee said in a statement to AFP.

"We are very unhappy with the outcome... We guarantee there won't be more situations like this in the 2016 Rio Games."



The jaguar, a 17-year-old female named Juma, had been raised since it was a cub and was kept in a military-run zoo in the Amazon with half a dozen siblings

The animal, a 17-year-old female named Juma, had been raised since it was a cub and was kept in the military-run zoo in the Amazon with half a dozen siblings.

Just before its escape, it and another jaguar had been exhibited as the Olympic torch crossing Brazil passed through the zoo on its way to Rio

de Janeiro, which is hosting the Games due to start August 5.

"Unfortunately, this occurred the day of the torch's passage," Evelyn said. "The animal participated in the event because the torch went through the zoo."

He added that Juma was not a wild animal, having been raised in captivity, and called its death "very sad."

The military has opened an investigation into the incident.



An athlete holds the Olympic Torch by a jaguar, called Juma, during a ceremony in Manaus, Brazil, on June 20, 2016, shortly before it was shot dead by soldiers

A US-based animal rights group decried the jaguar's "needless death."

"Wild [animals](#) held captive and forced to do things that are frightening, sometimes painful and always unnatural are ticking time bombs—our actions put them and humans at risk," Brittany Peet of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, or PETA, said in a statement.

The [jaguar](#) is the biggest feline in the Americas. It can weigh up to 135 kilograms (300 pounds) and is in danger of extinction.

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