

Group says South African donkeys killed for China market

January 27 2017, by Christopher Torchia

Reports that donkeys were bludgeoned with hammers and skinned alive on a South African farm highlight the illegal slaughter of increasing numbers of the animals, whose hides are used in traditional medicine in China, according to animal rights activists.

The Chinese embassy in South Africa on Friday noted recent reports that some Chinese nationals were involved in other such cases, saying it supports any efforts by South African authorities to combat the theft and slaughter of [donkeys](#), including the prosecution of those responsible.

"Up to now, China and South Africa do not have any agreement on entry-exit inspection and quarantine of South Africa donkey skins and meat," the embassy said in a statement. "And according to our knowledge, there is no Chinese company importing donkey skins from South Africa through legal channel."

The embassy expressed concern that media coverage had been "playing up wrong arguments and damaging China's image."

This week, South Africa's NSPCA, an animal protection group, said hundreds of donkeys were slaughtered on a farm in Northern Cape province. It cited witness accounts of the brutality of the killings. Two men, Heinrich Smit and Dawid Pappie, were arrested and face charges under South Africa's animal protection and meat safety acts, the group said.

The NSPCA had launched an investigation after receiving reports of missing donkeys in the area, said Inspector Mpho Mokoena of the group's farm animal protection unit.

A gelatin used in [traditional medicine](#) in China is extracted from donkey hides that are soaked or stewed, according to the NSPCA.

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