

# Three lions rescued in Albania sent to the Netherlands

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One of the lions, Bobby, in a cage of Tirana zoo on Tuesday before its transfer to the Netherlands

Three lions, rescued in October from a private zoo in Albania where they were kept in "hellish" conditions were transported Tuesday to the

Netherlands, an animal welfare organisation said.

"After a temporary stay in the Tirana zoo, Lensi, Bobby and Zhak will be in Felida Big Cat Centre in the Netherlands until their complete recovery," said Saimir Shehu of Albanian branch of the Four Paws welfare group.

In October police forcibly removed 11 animals, including the lions, from the private zoo at Fier, around 100 kilometres (60 miles) south of the capital Tirana, after being alerted by Four Paws that they were being kept in "absolutely horrible" living conditions.

"It's a hellish way of keeping animals," said Ioana Gabriela Dangler of Four Paws at the time.

The [animals](#) were transferred to the capital, but "the lions require a special medical care and the zoo in Tirana, where they are in cages, cannot provide them optimal conditions," Shehu told AFP.

The lions are in good physical health but show behavioural problems probably due to inappropriate living conditions in the small animal park surrounded by buildings in Tirana.

Depending on their readaptation in the Netherlands, where their new environment will be similar to their natural habitat, the officials will decide whether to keep them there or send them to South Africa.



Zhaku in a transportation cage wfor the journey to the Felida Big Cat Centre in the Netherlands

One of the lions, Lensi, had a serious eye infection and has been at risk of going blind. Another two show serious [behavioural problems](#) and also need extra care in order to fully recover.

In addition to the three lions, a bear and a zebra, some deer, antelopes and foxes were also removed from the zoo in Fieri, which has been closed since the raid.

The bear was sent to Germany, the zebra died on the way to Tirana zoo, the antelopes are healthy and the foxes were released to freedom.

The Felida centre is located in Nijeberkoop, a small village in the Northern part of the Netherlands and takes care of big cats that lived in poor, abusive [conditions](#) in private captivity, circuses or zoos.



Lenci is being checked by animal welfare experts before its transfer along with the two other lions

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