

Faroe Islands begin review of controversial dolphin hunt

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The Faroe Islands' prime minister ordered a re-evaluation of its controversial dolphin hunt after the unusually large slaughter of more than 1,400 Atlantic white-sided dolphins sparked an outcry.

The Faroe Islands, a Danish autonomous territory, said Tuesday it had begun discussions about the future of its controversial dolphin hunt, with

a decision expected in the coming weeks.

A petition with almost 1.3 million signatures calling for a ban on the traditional hunt was submitted to the Faroese government on Monday, the prime minister's office and whale conservation groups told AFP.

At a meeting on Tuesday in Torshavn, the government discussed the conclusions of a re-evaluation that Prime Minister Bardur a Steig Nielsen had ordered in September, after the unusually large slaughter of more than 1,400 Atlantic white-sided dolphins sparked an outcry.

"It was a first meeting. No decisions were taken," an official in the [prime minister](#)'s office told AFP.

He added that a final decision was expected "in a few weeks", and "several options" were on the table.

In the Faroese tradition known as "grindadrap", or "grind" for short, hunters surround dolphins or pilot [whales](#) with a wide semi-circle of fishing boats and drive them into a shallow bay where they are beached.

Fishermen on shore slaughter them with knives.

Every summer, images of the bloody hunt make headlines around the world and spark outrage among animal rights defenders who consider the practice barbaric.

But the hunt still enjoys broad support in the Faroes, where supporters point out that the animals have fed the [local population](#) for centuries.

Normally, around 600 [pilot whales](#) are hunted every year in this way.

But the dolphin hunt on September 12, 2021 in the Skala fjord was

much bigger, triggering an international outcry and pushing the government to reconsider the practice.

Only the dolphin [hunt](#) is currently being reviewed, not the entire "grind" tradition.

In the petition, handed over by the Whale and Dolphin Conservation organisation, signatories called for the end of the "cruel" practice.

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