

# Animal rights group launches campaign against horse and donkey carts

• By SHARON UDASIN

Animal rights group Hakol Chai launched a campaign protesting the use of horse- and donkey-drawn carts on city streets, stressing that the practice causes suffering to the animals and danger to human passersby.

The horses, the group contends, are often rented to peddlers for very minimal prices and typically receive no veterinary services, inadequate food and water supplies and hazardous living conditions. Not only do the horses themselves frequently suffer from exhaustion, malnutrition, disease and abandonment, their presence in city streets often dangerously disrupts human and vehicle traffic flow, a release from the organization said. Some particularly problematic cities include Tel Aviv, Ramat Gan, Kfar

Saba and Netanya, according to the group.

In order to combat the phenomenon, Hakol Chai has launched a "Witnesses Campaign" on its Facebook page, asking residents to take photos of horse carts with their cell phones.

"The response from concerned citizens upset by these terrible sights has been overwhelming," said Tal Sahar, a senior official at Hakol Chai, in the release. "Municipal authorities have shown themselves to be incapable of enforcing animal protection regulations. A law banning the practice is long overdue."

Today, only the police and the Agriculture Ministry have the power to enforce the existing national Animal Protection Law, which they often fail to do and which does not specifically

address animals working in urban environments, the organization said. While the city of Tel Aviv-Yafo did agree to ban the carts in 2009, the municipality did not end up having the resources to effectively enforce the ban, according to Hakol Chai.

To that effect, the group sent a letter on Sunday appealing to Interior Minister Eli Yishai, asking that he issue a model bylaw for cities that would prohibit the use of these carts on city streets, as has occurred in many cities throughout the world, according to Hakol Chai.

In the letter, the organization also suggested that the same officers who ticket illegally parked cars be assigned to fine those using horse- and donkey-drawn carts. In response to a query from *The Jerusalem Post*, however, an Interior Ministry spokes-

woman said that the movement of horses in city streets is under the jurisdiction of the Transportation Ministry, not the Interior Ministry.

The Interior Ministry cannot

require cities to enact bylaws within their borders, especially since roads are outside the responsibilities of the local authorities, the spokeswoman said.

**NOTE from Hakol Chai:** The Minister of the Interior does, in fact, have the authority to provide a model bylaw to cities, and Hakol Chai hopes he will do so.



CONCERNED RESIDENTS have sent Hakol Chai photos of horse-drawn carts, like this one, seen on Bugrashov Street in Tel Aviv. (Courtesy Hakol Chai)