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08 January 2021

URGENT APPEAL

FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL VETERINARY ASSISTANCE FOR MALIKA, SONU, NOOR JEHAN AND MADHU BALA, THE FOUR ELEPHANTS ORIGINALLY FROM TANZANIA, NOW CONTAINED AT THE KARACHI ZOO AND KARACHI SAFARI PARK

The Pro Elephant Network (PREN) consists of an international community of diverse individuals and organizations, comprising expertise from both western and eastern academies, including the fields of science, health, conservation, animal welfare, economics, community leadership, social justice and the law.

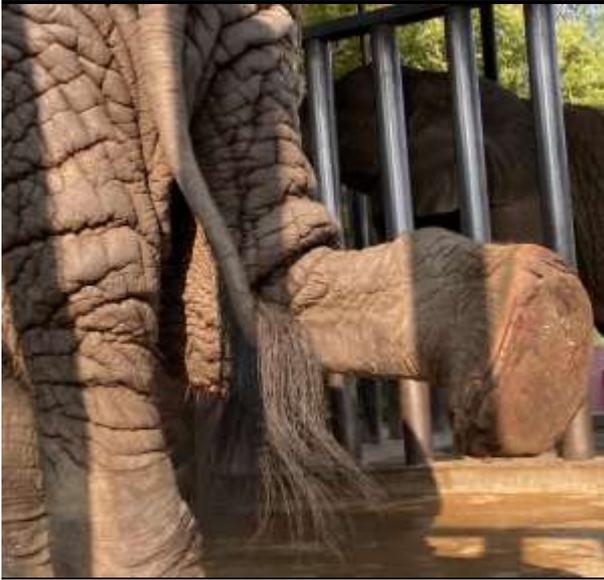
URGENT VETERINARIAN INTERVENTION

Members of the Pro Elephant Network have received images and videos of Malika, Sonu, Noor Jehan and Madhu Bala, four elephants held in captivity at the Karachi Safari Park and at the Karachi zoo. The same images and videos are being circulated on various social media platforms. Elephant experts have analysed this material and have advised that in order to prevent unnecessary premature death, an urgent medical assessment and intervention is required.

Members of the Pro Elephant Network are willing to offer expertise, specifically to provide much needed critical veterinary and husbandry support. The implementation of high-priority measures is needed to mitigate the elephants' critical state of health and to alleviate their obvious suffering.

Dr Brett Bard is a wildlife veterinarian and member of PREN. He has visually assessed the conditions of the elephants and has confirmed in particular that Malika is in dire need of urgent medical assistance. In the video, she attempts to rest her head on the bars of the enclosure in order to take some of her weight off her feet. According to Dr Bard, "She is compelled to stand on only two legs at a time while raising the other two because her feet are too painful to carry her weight. She can barely stand, let alone walk once allowed out of the enclosure. This is an emergency medical situation which could reflect abuse and cruelty and could be the result of extreme neglect and mismanagement, a condition which has led to unnecessary pain and suffering".





The condition of foot rot, with deformed and cracked nails and overgrown sole, is common in those captive elephants which are kept restricted on hard cement flooring, standing in urine and faeces. The cause of death in more than half of elephants that die in captivity has been attributed to foot disease. The equivalent in humans would be a deep, rotting blister that covers the entire sole of the foot.

Dr Bard suggests that standard treatment recommendations include releasing these elephants into the open pastures as soon as possible. They require immediate and urgent veterinary attention to address the potentially fatal disease. Treatment usually consists of debriding the necrotic flesh, cleaning and disinfecting the wounds, and administering systemic antibiotics to control the infection. Malika's condition requires exacting, qualified, experienced medical attention, since the incorrect prescription, quantities or administration could prove to be fatal.



REPORTS ON THE KARACHI ELEPHANTS

We include the report of zoologist Dr Marion Garai. Her areas of specialisation and expertise are on the social behaviour of elephants in captivity particularly in zoos and Social and Stress Related Behaviours of translocated juvenile elephants, including orphans. Marion is Chairperson of the Elephant Specialist Advisory Group - ESAG - and a Trustee of the Elephant Reintegration Trust - ERT-, has published extensively both academically and beyond, including a guide for tourists entitled "Understanding Elephants".



**Report on the sighting of videos of the African elephants
at Karachi Zoo and Karachi Safari Park
Dr Marion Garai**

7th January 2020

I have seen several videos of the Elephants currently held at Karachi zoo and Karachi Safari Park and following is my opinion as elephant expert with experience of 37 years in wild, captive, traumatised and orphaned elephants.

The Elephants were wild caught as very young (approx. 2-4 years old) in Tanzania. They arrived in Pakistan in 2009.

Karachi zoo has two elephants - Noor Jehan and Madhu Bala. Since their arrival at the zoo, they have been in the same cage, which is a small concrete cage of not more than 20m² surrounded by thick iron bars. The outside enclosure is slightly larger but also only concrete and iron bars. This is one of the most unacceptable facilities I have seen in my life. It is totally inadequate for any animal, let alone a sentient, cognitive, intelligent and highly social animal. The enclosures are totally barren, without food or water. There is no enrichment, the bedding is utterly poor, with just a bit of grass.

The elephants are chained by three legs on very short chains for most of the time, even when visitors are there. Any type of chaining other than for medical attention is not acceptable these days. Chaining by three legs, so that the elephant cannot move is the highest form of cruelty. The elephants have difficulty in getting up once they lie down, as they cannot get sufficient swing with the chained legs. They cannot do one step.

Both elephants show the highest form of frustration, aggression and stereotypies. One elephant swings her head in big circles in utmost frustration, kicks the grass and tries to charge the photographer. These elephants are mentally at the verge of going mad. The only entertainments they have are visitors that are allowed to touch the elephants and feed them through the bars, a very dangerous situation given the aggression and frustration of the elephants. It is inconceivable that people are allowed so close to these elephants.

Karachi Safari Park holds two elephants, Malika and Sonu who are chained, also on three legs, for 15 hours, standing in their own faeces and urine. This is completely unacceptable. The enclosures are also entirely devoid of anything. They are utterly barren, with concrete flooring and thick iron bars. The so called outside enclosure is totally inadequate. There is no provision of sand, water, food and absolutely nothing for the elephants to engage themselves with. They show extreme signs of frustration. One elephant is seen being hit by the keeper with a stick on the legs. Malika has a very swollen leg and is in obvious terrible pain, as she can hardly stand on this leg, but is made to walk! This is cruelty. Here the people are even allowed right into the cage with the chained elephants, which is absolutely unacceptable and unsafe.

The elephants have been degraded to tools of human amusement and certainly serve no purpose whatsoever in education.





In conclusion, I can say this is one of the worst facilities with the worst type of care giving I have seen to date. The elephants must immediately be given the proper medical and psychological attention and care and then released as soon as possible into a sanctuary where they can recover mentally and psychologically and start to lead a dignified life as elephant with other elephants.

ELEPHANTS IN CAPTIVITY

The welfare and health of elephants in captivity is directly dependent upon the quality of life they experience, which in turn is driven by the understanding the zoo keeper has of the specific needs of elephants. This understanding may or may not be informed by scientific knowledge. Sub-optimal conditions and husbandry practices can result in injury, disease and poor mental health. It is critical that environmental conditions, management and husbandry techniques are employed that promote positive physical and psychological health for all elephants in human care.

Elephants live highly complex social and emotional lives and need physical contact and bonding with other conspecifics. We have, due to Covid-19 experienced ourselves how hard is to be socially isolated, even when at home, with our family. Humans also, in fact, have complex social needs.

In addition, elephants crave space and movement. They cover long distances while feeding on vegetation. In the wild they walk up to 50 kilometres a day, every day. When elephants can't move, they develop potentially fatal conditions.

Captivity inevitably robs elephants of their most basic needs and for this reason there is a high mortality rate. The four elephants in Karachi are very young, between 12 and 14 years; they are unfortunately already displaying serious medical conditions.

Currently there is a worldwide debate discussing whether zoos or similar amusing parks can provide enough space and enrichment to properly care for elephants. This dispute has led several zoos to eliminate or phase out their elephant programs.

Pakistan has recently led this movement, after its outstanding and ground-breaking judgement in the Hon'ble High Court of Islamabad. This outcome made international headlines for defending the rights of non-human animals. Kaavan was retired in a sanctuary in Cambodia as well as other animals could retire in other locations. Due to an optimised care, Kaavan had immediately shown mental and physical progress and has been doing incredibly well. With this great success, Pakistan has shown the way of how elephants can and must be reintegrated into their own habitat.

THE CURRENT ELEPHANT FACILITIES IN KARACHI

In the Karachi Safari Park, only six hectares are dedicated to the elephants' enclosure. In this area, a bathing pool was constructed in 2014¹¹. As a cement pool, would not allow the elephants to mud-bath which is essential part in the daily hygiene, to remove insects and parasites. The pool is kept empty-dry. In addition, the elephants cannot dust-bath since sand is not provided. The elephants are only sprinkled with a water-pipe which is not adequate.

¹¹ [New enclosures: Safari Park makes room for elephants \(tribune.com.pk\)](https://tribune.com.pk)



We have been informed that the elephants are very seldom allowed to access the external area and require to be accompanied by a caretaker when they are outdoor; this is the reason why they are left inside, chained. Besides the inadequate size of the housing, the hardness of the cement floor damages the feet.

Similarly to the Safari Park, the Karachi zoo has barren cement enclosures in a structure more than one hundred years old and completely inadequate.



The elephants stand and lay, chained, on the cement pavement. When they are unchained, they walk in circle inside the cell, as many videos confirm. This is a sign of severe mental and physical stress. The elephants are sprayed with water pipes when it's too hot but cannot bath, nor mud-bath. There is no form of enrichment in the enclosure.





LONG TERM SOLUTIONS

Elephants' rituals involve mudding, bathing, physical interacting, being tactile and assuring each other; mourning their dead and countless other attributes which, very interestingly, align much of human behaviour. With a complex brain, emotional structure and physical, full body-using and extremely social embedded life-style, denial of any of these descriptions causes the incredible suffering of trauma, both physical and psychological.

Healthy feet are maintained by allowing extensive exercise on natural terrain that massages the feet by walking over a textured terrain of grass and stones. General health management should include adequate exercise, appropriate diet, stimuli and contact with other elephants. Most important is to introduce as soon as possible a management system based on positive reinforcement in Protected Contact, for the safety of staff and the free choice of the elephants. Staff should be trained regarding this modern and successful method.

These four elephants were caught from the same location in Tanzania in 2009. They spent the first year together in an enclosure at the Karachi Safari Park, before Noor Jehan and Madhu Bala were moved to the zoo. The undersigned members of PREN recommend further separation should be avoided at all costs.

Keeping elephants in captivity is a controversial practise and for this reason, many zoos are closing their elephant exhibits and retiring their elephants to sanctuaries.

We are prepared to offer assistance including offering a rewilding, re-integration program which would see these four elephants thrive in a more natural environment in Africa.

Yours Sincerely,

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Signed by the following Members of



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