

Evaluation of “animal rescue” in Turkey

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Summary: The aim of this study was to the bioethical and legal evaluation of search-rescue missions conducted for animals by municipalities, fire departments, Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency, Search and Rescue Association and citizens under such conditions as “fallen”, “frozen”, “collapse” and “fire”. Interviews with the persons who work in these leading institutions and organizations, their activities, national legislation on the subject, highest circulated four newspapers, with internet archives according to the Press adds Agency data between the dates of January 2010 and February 2015 were the materials of the study. Internet archives of these newspapers were scanned using keywords “animal”, “animal rescue”, “animal casualties” and “animal loss”. Scanning of legislations showed that there was no specific legislation and also no topics regarding with “animal rescue”. According to the newspapers’ scanning, so many news about rescued and wasted animals (horses, cows, dogs, cats, goats etc.) were encountered. Municipalities, fire departments, Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency, Search and Rescue Association teams, public and other participants. Universal declaration of animal rights points out that “All animals are borned equal with respect to life and they have the same existing right”. For this, evaluation of this important subject, determination of a specific legislation, assignment of authorized unit for rescue operations, coordination between the institutions, providing necessary equipment to rescuers, in terms of no harm ethical principle least pain and damages, rescuing with possible least pain and damages is necessary.

Key words: Animal, animal rescue, bioethics, veterinary medicine.

Türkiye’de “hayvan kurtarma” konusu üzerine bir değerlendirme

Özet: Çalışmada, Türkiye’de belediyeler, itfaiye ekipleri, Başbakanlık Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı, Arama Kurtarma Derneği ve halk tarafından “düşme”, “donma”, “çökme”, “yangın” gibi zor durumda kalan hayvanlara yapılan arama-kurtarma çalışmalarının biyoetik ve mevzuat açısından değerlendirilmesi amaçlandı. Çalışmanın materyalini hayvan kurtarma konusunda ön planda olan kurum ve kuruluşların faaliyetleri ile bu kurum ve kuruluşlarda görev yapan yetkili kişilerle yapılan görüşmeler; konuya ilişkin ulusal mevzuat; Ocak 2010 - Şubat 2015 yılları arasında Basın İlan Kurumu verilerine göre Türkiye’de internet arşivi olan, en yüksek tiraja sahip dört gazete oluşturdu. Yapılan mevzuat taramasında özel olarak herhangi bir mevzuat olmadığı gibi, konuyla ilişkili olabilecek mevzuatta “hayvan kurtarma” ile ilgili herhangi bir madde ve/veya tanımlama olmadığı tespit edildi. Gazete taramasında ise kurtarılan ve telef olan hayvanların (at, inek, köpek, kedi, keçi vd) yer aldığı çok sayıda haberin olduğu; bu yapılan arama-kurtarma çalışmalarında belediyeler, itfaiye ekipleri, Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı, Arama Kurtarma Derneği ekipleri, halk ve diğerlerinin yer aldığı belirlendi. Hayvan Hakları Evrensel Bildirgesinin birinci maddesinde belirtilen “Bütün hayvanlar yaşam önünde eşit doğarlar ve aynı var olma hakkına sahiptirler” ilkesinden yola çıkarak, bu önemli konunun değerlendirilmesi; spesifik bir mevzuat çıkarılması; kurtarma operasyonlarında yetkili bir birim belirlenerek, diğer kurumlarla koordineli bir şekilde çalışması; ayrıca operasyonlara katılan ekiplere gerekli ekipmanların sağlanması yanında, eğitimler verilerek etik ilkeler arasında yer alan “zarar vermeme” ilkesi doğrultusunda mümkün olan en az acı ve zararlar hayvanların kurtarılmasına çalışılması gerektiği söylenebilir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Biyoetik, hayvan, hayvan kurtarma, veteriner hekimliği.

Introduction

Search and Rescue (SR) is defined as the rescue of helpless victims injured in potentially fatal accidents or natural disasters. SR is the collective work of searching for and rescuing victims at risk, lost, or crashed in the air or, on water using various vehicles, specialized equipment, and rescue teams.ⁱ

In SR operation, SR teams have to be first to reach the victims of accidents. These operatives have numerous objectives and conduct various rescue methods. Furthermore, many rescue missions involve complex circumstances that pose lethal risks to both victims and operatives (6).

ⁱ Turkish Republic Official Gazette registered 12.12.2001 issue 24611.

In Turkey, governmental institutions are generally carrying out SR missions. In addition, private associations have demonstrated increasing effectiveness in developments in line with the Search and Rescue Association (Arama Kurtarma Derneği - AKUT) since the 1999 Marmara earthquake (6).

The aim of this study was to conduct a bioethical and legal evaluation of SR missions conducted for animals by municipalities, fire departments, Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD), AKUT and citizens in situations named according to the keywords “trapped,” “fallen”, “frozen”, “collapse” or “fire”.

Materials and Methods

The study material was composed from proceedings of prominent institutions prevalent in animal rescue missions, and legislation and newspaper articles collected from the online archives of four newspapers with the highest circulation (Habertürk, Hürriyet, Milliyet and Sabah, respectively) according to the dataⁱⁱ of Press Advertising Agency of Turkey from January 2010 to February 2015.

The online archives of these newspapers were searched for articles via search engines using the keywords “animal”, “animal rescue”, “animal casualty” and “animal loss.” Articles on animals rescued or wasted were found in 48 news and presented in tables according to the situation affecting the animals (Tables 1 and 2).

Legislation coverage was reviewed by determining the laws and regulations released by respective institutions using the keywords of “Rescue”, “Disaster” and “Emergency”.

Results

The searched newspapers have included many articles for rescued or wasted animals. Table 1 provides the genus and species of these animals.

It was also determined that news were included terms such as “small cattle”, “bovine animals” and “many animals”. Furthermore many situations were noted where animals were either rescued or wasted, as listed in Table 2.

It was also noted that AFAD provincial directorates, AKUT, municipality rescue teams, municipal veterinarians, fire departments, gendarmes, citizens, rangers, provincial directorates, civil defense search and rescue directorates, other search and rescue teams, regional directorates of forestry and waterworks, specialists from natural preserves, administration for waterworks and sewerage, and freelance veterinarians participated in SR missions. In addition SR missions were conducted by a single institution or cooperating institutions.

Table 1: Species and class of rescued and/or wasted animals.

Tablo 1: Kurtarılan ve/veya telef olan hayvanların türleri ve sınıfları.

Genus	Species
Ruminants	- Camel - Cattle
Companion animals	- Cat - Dog
Poultry	- Chicken - Pigeon - Partridge - Stork - Other Birds
Small ruminants	- Goat - Sheep
Disowned and/or Exhausted Animals	- Cat - Dog
Equines	- Donkey - Horse
Wild animals	- Bear - Boar - Fox
Others	- Honeybee - Sea Turtle

Table 2: Situations in which animals are rescued and/or wasted.

Tablo 2: Hayvanların kurtarıldığı ve/veya telef olduğu durumlar.

Situations	Events
Collapse	- Stable - Barn Collapse - Dome collapse
Natural Disasters	- Avalanches - Cave-ins - Earthquakes - Floods - Wildfires
Falling	- Pits - Sewers - Air Tunnels - Wells - Falls - Manhole
Encasement	- Highlands - Mountains - Rolling Hills - Roofs - Treetops
Trapped	- Between bars - Between grills - Inside automobiles
Others	- Frozen - Heavy rains - Other rains - Quicksand - Stable or barn fire - Strangled - Stuck between fences - Stuck under ruins - Stuck in tar - Trapped

ⁱⁱ Access:[<http://basinilankurumu.gov.tr>] Access date: 01.03.2015.

When enacted laws and legislations were examined using the keywords of “Rescue”, “Disaster”, and “Emergency”, it was observed that no specific law or legislation and no legislative passages or dictations concerning “animal rescue” were present in the covered texts. The covered legal texts are as follows:

- *Sivil Savunma Kanunu* (Civil Defense Law; Turkish Republic Official Gazette registered in 13.06.1958 issue 9931),
- *Umumi Hayata Müessir Afetler Dolayısıyla Alınacak Tedbirlerle Yapılacak Yardımlara Dair Kanun* (Law regarding assistance provided and measures taken in the case of public disasters; Turkish Republic Official Gazette registered in 25.05.1959, issue 10213),
- *Tabii Afet Nedeniyle Meydana Gelen Hasar ve Tahribata İlişkin Hizmetlerin Yürütülmesine Dair Kanun* (Law regarding provisions concerning damages and causalities during natural disasters; Turkish Republic Official Gazette registered in 25.07.1995, issue 22354),
- *Türk Arama ve Kurtarma Yönetmeliği* (Turkish Regulation for Search and Rescue; Turkish Republic Official Gazette registered in 12.12.2001, issue 24611),
- *İlk Yardım Yönetmeliği* (Regulation for First Aid; Turkish Republic Official Gazette registered in 22.05.2002, issue 24762),
- *5199 sayılı Hayvanları Koruma Kanunu* (Animal Protection Law, No. 5199s; Turkish Republic Official Gazette registered in 01.07.2004, issue 25509),
- *Belediye İtfaiye Yönetmeliği* (Regulation for Municipal Fire Brigades; Turkish Republic Official Gazette registered in 21.10.2006, issue 26326),
- *5902 sayılı Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığının Teşkilat ve Görevleri Hakkında Kanun* (Law regarding the structure and objectives of Disaster and Emergency Management Authority, No. 5902; Turkish Republic Official Gazette registered in 17.06.2009, issue 27261),
- *Kimyasal, Biyolojik, Radyolojik ve Nükleer Tehlikelere Dair Görev Yönetmeliği* (Regulation of duties in the case of hazards caused by chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risks; Turkish Republic Official Gazette registered in 03.05.2012, issue 28281),
- *Afet ve Acil Durum Müdahale Hizmetleri Yönetmeliği* (Regulation for intervention in disasters and emergencies; Turkish Republic Official Gazette registered in 18.12.2013, issue 28855).

Discussion and Conclusion

The concept of SR in the case of disasters in Turkey exists; however, it is evident that there are misconceptions regarding interventions. For example, there is no standardized workflow and hierarchy regulating communication, personnel, equipment, procedures to be followed, and maintaining capacity (5, 6). Akyel (1) highlighted that workflow and communication networks must be established at both the central and local levels to increase the effectiveness and reaction times of concerned operatives (disaster works, civil defense, meteorology, fire brigade, civil medics, and search-rescue teams) in SR missions. For example, the European Alliance for Rescue Centres and Sanctuaries (EARS) was established by developing a network in Europe for the protection and prosperity of animals.ⁱⁱⁱ The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), which promotes animal welfare in the United States (US), Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, rescues hundreds of animals each year.^{iv} In the present study, it was noted that interventions in SR missions are actualizing by various operatives such as municipalities, provincial AFAD directorates, fire departments, gendarmes and AKUT teams. The weaknesses in SR missions for humans, as highlighted by Kadioğlu (5), are also evident in animal rescues, as are multiple interventions by different operatives. Multiple operatives operating in the same SR mission leads to miscommunication and disorganization. Here the proposal stated by Akyel (1) is important namely establishing a coordination network regulated by a single authority at both central and local levels by creating an EARS-like network within the country through an organization like the RSPCA.

Since the operation of SR teams is wide-ranging, various methods are implemented for different types of accidents. Many missions include fatal risks for both victims and operatives. These variables in mission localization (mountains, pits, tunnels, etc.) mean that the necessary training, equipment, and techniques are subject to change (6). Yiğit (8) recommended that to accomplish solid results in animal rescue missions by providing special emergency aid, cooperation between associations with significant know-how of disasters such as AKUT and AFAD must be established. For example, the British Equine Veterinary Association and Hampshire Firefighter and Rescue Service are cooperating to offer basic first aid training for large animal rescues (3). The Missouri Large Animal Rescue (MERS) organizes animal rescue training

ⁱⁱⁱ Access: [<http://ears.org/about-ears/who-we-are/>] Access date: 27.10.2016.

^{iv} Access: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Society_for_the_Prevention_of_Cruelty_to_Animals] Access date: 27.10.2016.

in the United States,^v and the University of Wisconsin School of Veterinary Medicine offers courses and training on animal rescue techniques.^{vi} In the present study, it is determined that various situations affect animals such as being trapped in a tree or between rocks falling into pits, or freezing (Table 2). In addition, regular citizens are involved in SR operations in some situations. These unconscious threats can result in permanent injuries or deaths. Aside from the situations present in human rescues as noted by Seğmenoğlu (6) it is necessary to intervene using different methods and equipment in animal rescues. Emergency aid provided to animal victims should not differ from that provided to human victims by trained operatives. Yiğit (8) noted cooperation between animal rescue institutions as a necessity. Furthermore, it can be proposed that specialists (primarily veterinarians) offer proper training to SR teams dealing with animal victims and provide them with vital equipment for all situations, as practiced in the United Kingdom and United States. This process should be in accordance with animal welfare and the ethical principle of “no harm”.

The principal aim of all SR missions is to locate and reach the victims of accidents, who may face death, in any potentially fatal situation and provide emergency intervention. This should be followed by transferring the victim to the nearest health institution (6). In the United States, in partnership with the Florida Veterinary Medical Association and Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine created the Veterinary Emergency Treatment Service (VETS) for the intervention and treatment of animals in difficult situations.^{vii} The results of the present study indicated that only one instance where veterinarians took an active role in SR missions. Rescued animals may be subject to various injuries including fractures, ruptures, dehydration, and shock. Therefore, veterinary assistance should be provided to rescued animals both at the accident location and after the rescue mission. Towards this end, the coordination of respective institutions (veterinary faculties, municipalities, and directorates of the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Livestock) should be established, similar to that in the Florida example. If institutions are absent, interventions from private veterinary institutions should be called on to deliver emergency aid to animal victims.

The Regulation for First Aid describes first aid as the first intervention at an accident location without the use of

medication or medical methods on accident victims to prevent a fatality until health specialists’ intervention. The same regulation defines a first aid operative as one with at least basic first aid training who is tasked with providing emergency aid to victims without the use of medications. The Fire Fighting and Rescue Service animal rescue team located in Hampshire, England provides rescue services for horses, cattle, and swine in accidents including wildfires, quicksand, mud pits, or drowning. According to this service, for cases regarding animal rescues, their team can be communicated with landline (3). In the United States, a special transport network named the Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue created “the Horse 911” line for the rescue of horses in difficult situations.^{viii} Also it is important that, in Turkey, witnesses should call trained operatives such as fire departments, municipalities, and the AFAD for animal rescues as in the examples on the United Kingdom and United States, and these institutions should provide call-lines (e.g., 112, 155) to provide easier access to witnesses.

One of the strongest value judgments for animal rescues in public opinion is the general acceptance of the “humans first” principle and the common notion that the misery of animals cannot be compared to that of humans (7). In the present study, it was observed that legal texts inclusively covered humans in SR legislature, but not animals specifically. Thus, it can be argued that legal texts have been prepared as human-centric positions, and should be replaced with legal bills based on life-centric notions.

Disorganized and unplanned foundations and expansions of cityscapes result in many human-oriented disasters (2). The protection of living species is rooted in ethical doctrines termed the 4E principles (economical, ecological, esthetical, and ethical). In the present study, situations including collapses, fires, and the flooding of barns, stables, and domes along with wildfires (Table 2) were noted, and it is evident that disorganized cityscape expansions also cause risks to both animals and humans, as stated in the literature. Thus, it is argued that organized and planned expansions of cityscapes should address comprehensive ethical principles (4E principles) to actively reduce risks to humans and animals by establishing a strong organization and cooperation.

AKUT has successfully rescued 862 animals from various accidents between 1999 and February 2015^{ix}. In this context, AKUT and other institutions and

^v Access: [<https://mersteam.org/about-us/>] Access date: 27.10.2016.

^{vi} Access: [<https://www.vetmed.wisc.edu/students-learn-large-animal-rescue/>] Access date: 27.10.2016.

^{vii} Access: [<http://www.vetmed.ufl.edu/about-the-college/administration/directors-office/about-vets/>] Access date: 27.10.2016.

^{viii} Access: [<http://tlaer.org/>] Access date: 27.10.2016.

^{ix} Access: [<http://www.akut.org.tr/operasyon-istatistikleri>] Access: 24.03.2015.

organizations should keep their own records, and analyze and make publicly available reports on the animal rescue missions conducted.

The first bill of the Universal Declaration of Animal Rights ^x states that all animals are borned as equals in life and have equal rights to existence. Based on this universal dictation, specific legislation is a necessity, as is the establishment of an authority for animal SR missions. This authority would centrally organize and coordinate missions between operatives by providing essential training and equipment in view of the welfare of rescued animals and ethical principles such as “no harm” to establish solid practices for the efficient rescue of animal victims.

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^x The Universal Declaration of Animal Rights was proclaimed in Paris on 15 October 1978 at the UNESCO headquarters.