



## Rescued Afghanistan dogs arrive at Toronto sanctuary

A mixed-breed street dog named Papo chased toys and rolled around in the sun on a recent clear day at an east Toronto dog sanctuary.

It's a change of pace for Papo after a long journey from Taliban-controlled Afghanistan to Canada, where she arrived last month along with 10 other dogs who were evacuated from the country by the animal welfare group **No Dogs Left Behind.**

Group spokesman Jeffrey Beri said the organization has brought hundreds of dogs and cats from Kabul to Canada since January, after the animals were left behind when U.S. troops withdrew from the country last summer.

"I hope that they get the love and attention that they so well deserve," Beri said of the Afghan dogs' new lives in Canada.

The final 10 dogs to arrive were either too young or not strong enough to travel on the initial flight in January. The organization now aims to get them fostered and adopted to new homes as quickly as possible, once they are rehabilitated and vetted.



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No Dogs Left Behind founder Jeffrey Beri kisses Admiral, one of the first dogs his organization rescued from Afghanistan earlier this year, as staff member Rayvn Ronchin watches, at the sanctuary in Toronto, on Wednesday, June 29, 2022. By July 1, the remaining 10 mixed-breed street dogs, who were too young to transport earlier this year from Afghanistan will have arrived to the sanctuary.

When dogs first arrive to the No Dogs Left Behind safehouse, Beri said they're often traumatized and must begin a process of rehabilitation to trust humans again.

Consistency and routine are important factors for the dogs' rehabilitation, he said. Rescue dogs at the sanctuary have very strict schedules for eating, going outside, having their shelters cleaned and socializing with other dogs.

It was a complicated journey for the animals. After the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention banned the importation of dogs to the U.S. from countries it considers to be high risk for dog rabies, including Afghanistan, Beri said it became more difficult for the dogs to be brought to safety.

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In January, Beri said he spent two weeks in Afghanistan assessing dogs in the care of Kabul Small Animal Rescue. He then loaded them into a private cargo plane and accompanied the animals on the trip to begin their new lives in Canada.

"At the end, the Afghans gave free passage out for the dogs, I do commend them for that," he said.

Back in Toronto, Beri recalled an emotional family reunion at the animal sanctuary this week when the father of Papo's three puppies arrived days after the three young dogs.

"We were all crying," said Beri. "He's here, he's free, he couldn't be happier to see Papo and Papo couldn't be happier to see him."

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