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Corporation-run animal birth control centre accused of cruelty

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CHENNAI: In what comes as yet another shocker to animal activists barely a month after they brought to light the poisoning and burning of 15 strays in Chitlapakkam, a corporation-run Animal Birth Control (ABC) centre in Basin Bridge has come under heat for its alleged negligence and cruelty towards dogs.

Through a video shot on September 24 at the Greater Chennai Corporation's Pulianthope pound, Almighty Animal Care Trust has alleged that more than a 100 dogs — many of them healthy — are locked with diseased canines. Sai Vignesh, who runs the trust alleges that but for the milk and bread provided by the local Jain community, the animals don't get any food from the centre. "With no quarantine section for mange dogs, poor hygiene and starvation, the animals fall ill," he says. "The security at the pound seized our cellphones so we had to shoot these videos using a pen camera," he adds. Another video shows blood stains on the floor where the canines are kept and a dead dog lies amid them.

Vignesh and two other activists filed a complaint with the Basin Bridge police, following which an enquiry had been ordered. The activists also filed a petition with the corporation commissioner, but were told that there was no mismanagement at the centre.

When contacted, A Mytheen Fathima, corporation's chief veterinary officer, accused the footage to be distorted. "It's fake news. We have submitted a report to the government on this episode. The blood may be because of the wounded dogs at the centre. We are running the place well, as per ABC rules," she said.

There are three corporation-run ABC centres in the city and they have received flak in the past for alleged cruelty to animals. Activists have accused staffers of picking up neutered dogs from one neighbourhood and releasing them in another, in exchange for money from residents. "In many cases, they don't release the neutered dogs back into their area, which we believe is also the case with this pound," says Vignesh.