

18.95x16.91	2	עמוד 6	THE JERUSALEM POST - FRONT	05/07/2012	32737212-7
הכל חי עמותה עזרה לבעלי חיי - 37060					

# Animal rights group calls for eradication of horse-drawn carts

• By SHARON UDASIN

The prevalence of the rag-and-bone man, sluggishly pulling his wares about in a horse-drawn cart, was apparently not limited to the 19th-century streets of Europe but is a surging phenomenon on the streets of Israel today.

In a letter sent to Transportation Minister Israel Katz on Wednesday morning, animal rights organization Hakol Chai asked the minister to take on the groups' ongoing struggle against this continuing trend of peddling goods and carriages on horseback, which they said constitutes abuse to the animals. They therefore called upon Katz to revise a basic definition in the country's existing traffic ordinances, in which an animal-drawn cart is defined as a mode of transportation – and thus grants validity to a form of horse abuse, according to the group.

"In Israel 2012 a horse harnessed to a cart is not a vehicle, but abuse," the group said.

Aside from the subject of animal welfare, which constitutes a significant problem in the carhorse phenomenon, employing horse-drawn carriages constitutes a safety risk for all users of the road – motor vehicles, drivers, passengers and pedestrians – creating congestion and consequently, traffic delays, wrote Michal Wollansky-Atias, professional director of Hakol Chai, in the letter.

In recent months, Hakol Chai asked members of the public to send in pictures and location information whenever they saw a horse-drawn cart, and in response,



A HORSE pulls a wagon on Yigal Allon Street in Tel Aviv last year. (Courtesy Hakol Chai)

the group received dozens of photos on a daily basis of horses in "humiliating situations" across the country, the organization said. Many of these public reports came from Tel Aviv, Ramat Gan, Givatayim, Kfar Saba, Netanya and other locations, according to Hakol Chai.

The local authorities, however, have little ability to address the phenomenon and find themselves combating the presence of carhorses on their streets, Wollansky-Atias said. She therefore demanded that the minister revise the existing basic definition in the law that labels a horse-drawn cart a vehicle, in order to help eradicate the phenomenon.

"It is inconceivable that at the peak of the year 2012, sights of horses being

exploited, neglected and injured still constitute an integral part of the urban landscape in Israel's reality," Wollansky-Atias said. "Changes to this definition in the law do not entail resources or a budget and are a matter of policy only. We call on the Transportation Minister to not give validity to this phenomenon of abuse in city streets, which for much of the general public has become an environmental nuisance at a personal level."

In response to a query from *The Jerusalem Post*, a Transportation Ministry spokeswoman said that the ministry would only provide an in-depth answer to the letter after conducting an extensive review of the issues by means of professional bodies.