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DGPs urged to enforce animal protection laws

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Pune: The Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) has issued circulars to director generals of police in states and union territories to intervene and enforce animal protection laws.

The move comes after the welfare board received complaints that housing societies are harassing animal lovers for feeding stray animals and keeping pets in their flats.

The circular states that such acts by residential societies amount to gross violation of the law. The welfare board urged police to investigate and act against animal cruelty

cases at the earliest.

Vinod Kumar, AWBI assistant secretary, told TOI that they have been receiving numerous such complaints from animal lovers across the country. "We have come across several instances where animal welfare activists or citizens showing compassion to stray or pet dogs are harassed and intimidated by their neighbours or others. In several cases, housing society associations told residents not to keep pets in their flats. The associations even try to intimidate them to get rid of their pets," he said.

Kumar said residents' welfare associations and

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apartment owners' associations cannot legally introduce any sort of ban on keeping pets and cannot cite dog barking as a reason for such a move. "The general body also cannot frame bye-laws in a manner that is against the laws of the country such as the

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act as well as the Constitution," he added.

The welfare board's circular to DGPs states, "In several areas, compassionate citizens are harassed due to the frivolous and unsubstantiated complaints made by those people who are inimical to stray and pet dogs even though citizens showing compassion are only carrying out fundamental duties enshrined in the Constitution of India."

The board has also urged the DGPs to direct personnel of all police stations in their states to ensure that compassionate citizens are not harassed unnecessarily.

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