



CAPE of Good Hope SPCA inspector Siviwe Noko sometimes braves dangerous home visits to make a better life for abused and mistreated animals. | YOLISA TSWANYA

■ DEDICATION

A day in the life of an SPCA animal lover

Regularly subjected to verbal assaults, Siviwe Noko's devotion to animals keeps him going

YOLISA TSWANYA
yolisa.tswanya@inl.co.za

HE OFTEN has to put himself in precarious situations in dangerous neighbourhoods.

But the fear that goes along with it is not enough to stop Cape of Good Hope (CoGH) SPCA inspector Siviwe Noko from waking up each morning in the hope that he can make life better for abused and mistreated animals.

Noko is regularly subjected to verbal assaults by alleged animal abusers, but says his love for animals makes him willing to endure it all over again.

He has been an inspector for the SPCA for the past three years, and on

Friday gave the Cape Times an exclusive look into what his day entails.

The visit followed a CoGH SPCA inspector being held hostage for two hours while conducting a home inspection in Parow two weeks ago.

Carina Bodenstein was inspecting the home of a man who had applied to adopt an animal from the SPCA, who then became aggressive when his application was rejected.

Noko said he starts his morning doing paperwork at the SPCA's Grassy Park office, where complaints from concerned residents land.

"Most of the cases I respond to are ones that involve serious animal cruelty, and sometimes dogfighting. Like here, in Ocean View, it's mainly

dogfighting. Then in Fish Hoek and areas like Kommetjie, it's usually noise complaints. In areas like Khayelitsha and Mitchells Plain, that's where you see the serious animal cruelty cases, where you find animals without food, water or shelter."

Noko said they always educate animal owners and teach them how to properly handle their pets.

But their warnings sometimes fell on deaf ears, he said.

"You find that some of the owners are stubborn and insist that they love their animal, but when you look at it you see that it is not love. When I see people neglecting them, it really breaks my heart."

Noko said the cruellest treatment

of an animal he has witnessed was the stabbing and killing of Benji, a dog that was stabbed by two men in full view of the public, including children in Khayelitsha, in 2018.

A chilling video clip of the suspects brutally and repeatedly knifing Benji in full view of horrified passers-by was shot by a witness and sent to the Cape Times.

Cases were opened against the two men and they face charges under the Animal Protection Act.

"Seeing how they stabbed the dog over and over again was heartbreaking and it was in view of children. Those children could grow up thinking that behaviour is okay."

Last week CoGH spokesperson

Belinda Abraham said they responded to complaints of dogfighting and were able to rescue one victim.

"Unfortunately the culprits fled the scene and the dog will receive treatment at our hospital. Further investigations are under way and charges of illegal dogfighting will be opened at the Ocean View police station," Abraham said.

She added that any person found guilty on charges involving animal fighting can be sentenced to a maximum fine of R80 000 and/or 24 months imprisonment.

"Please report any such illegal activities to our Inspectorate by calling 021 700 4158/9 or 083 326 1604 – your details will be kept confidential."