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Honorable Officials of Austria:

It is my understanding the Republic of Austria is governed according to the principles of representative democracy. Yet on May 21, 2008, Austrian police invaded 23 homes and offices of animal protection advocates, arresting 14 citizens on a hunch they'd formed a criminal organization.

Without regard for individual liberties, officers acting on behalf of an independent court ransacked properties, shattering doors and seizing computers and documents. Some "suspects" were arrested at gunpoint, despite a lack of incriminating evidence.

These events threaten the notion of constitutional rights within a free society. I respectfully demand the release of 10 Austrian activists still detained under §278a of the Austrian penal code.

Please terminate §278a proceedings, which essentially blacklist political/social activists as conspirators in criminal organizations.

The 10 activists could languish in pre-trial detention for months under vague allegations of "Danger of Destruction of Evidence" and "Danger of Committing Further Crimes." I've learned files submitted to their lawyers failed to prove criminal offense and that access to full documentation has been limited. Prolonged custody violates human rights and constitutional privileges to fair legal proceedings.

It is no surprise demonstrators in Austria, Romania, Germany, Sweden, the United States and elsewhere continue to stand in solidarity against this miscarriage of justice.

Please let me know of actions underway to release these unlawfully detained animal welfare advocates in Austria.

Thank you,