



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Authorities Charge Cat Hoarders with 225 Counts for Animal Cruelty

Howard County animal control officers have filed criminal charges against two women living in a house where 75 cats were seized last month. All of the animals impounded were very sick or already dead. Ayten Icgoren, 78, and Nese Enetullah Icgoren, 50, both of 7383 Swan Point Way in Columbia, each were charged in a summons over the weekend with 225 counts related to the cruelty, neglect and suffering of the cats.

Animal control officers began an investigation in early August after receiving numerous citizen complaints about a suspicious odor coming from the Icgoren home. Officers served a search warrant at the house Aug. 10 and seized the cats. The residents were not home at the time the warrant was executed.

Of the 75 cats, 58 cats were alive, but in critically ill condition and 17 were found dead. The surviving cats were taken to a local veterinarian, who determined that 50 were in such poor condition that they would have to be euthanized. Of the remaining eight cats, which all suffered from malnutrition, viral infections and other illnesses, five have died. The surviving three are still in poor condition.

Both Icgoren women face 75 counts of inflicting unnecessary suffering and pain and 75 counts of failure to provide proper care for the cats. Each of those misdemeanor counts carries a fine of up to \$1,000 and/or jail time up to 90 days. Under the law, they each could be ordered to undergo psychological counseling.

The women face an additional 75 misdemeanor counts of violating the Howard County animal cruelty code, which carries a fine of up to \$1,000 per count. Ayten Icgoren also is charged with one count of interfering with an officer's investigation, a county violation that carries a fine of \$100-\$150.

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