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CTV TORONTO



Search warrant executed at Toronto Humane Society

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The Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has stripped the Toronto Humane Society of its affiliate status, a move that will immediately

prohibit the embattled organization from conducting cruelty investigations.

The move came in the wake of a series of *Globe and Mail* stories which probed the Humane Society's restrictive euthanasia policy and raised questions about the way the organization is managed.

The articles suggest the animals suffer unnecessarily in their cages and that the organization uses huge sums of money for litigation.

Late Tuesday afternoon, the OSPCA executed a search warrant at the Humane Society, which is located on River Street in east-end Toronto.

Kristin Williams, an OSPCA spokesperson, confirmed to ctvtoronto.ca that the investigation process was "underway" as of 4:30 p.m. Tuesday.

She said the investigation could last "a couple of weeks."

"We need to interview the witnesses who have come forward as a result of the articles, and also those witnesses who have come forward since," Williams said in a brief telephone interview.

Prior to the search warrant being executed, the OSPCA also issued a news release explaining its actions on Tuesday.

"The allegations in the *Globe and Mail* articles suggest that Toronto Humane Society is permitting the unnecessary suffering of animals with a restrictive euthanasia policy and permitting animals to be in distress. Additional allegations include improper management of staff, volunteers, resources and finances," the OSPCA said in the news release.

Under the OSPCA Act, OSPCA investigators may use police powers to enforce animal cruelty laws on behalf of the province.

OSPCA Chief Inspector Hugh Coghill said his organization is obligated to investigate if it "receives a credible allegation of animals in distress."

Tim Trow, president of the Humane Society, defended his organization in a letter published in the *Globe and Mail* on Monday.

In the letter, he acknowledged the challenge of caring for 10,000 animals each year but said that animals are treated with care and compassion.

"The point is that sick animals are given a chance, not simply euthanized on entry because they are abandoned and homeless," he said. "We are proud of this and our members support it."

Meanwhile, a protest is being organized outside the Humane Society for June 20.

The protest is being organized by Torontonians through an online forum on Facebook. As of Tuesday afternoon, 75 people have confirmed they will attend.

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