



**Best Friends**  
ANIMAL SOCIETY

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **300 dogs, cats to be airlifted out of Beirut** *Best Friends organizes rescue for victims of Middle East war*

**Kanab, UT 09/20/2006** – Four-footed victims of the recent war between Israel and the Hezbollah are packing their crates and getting ready to fly to new homes in the United States.

On Monday, September 25th, 300 homeless pets from Beirut will be airlifted to Best Friends Animal Sanctuary, America's largest refuge for abused and abandoned pets.

"Thousands of dogs and cats were left behind when people evacuated Beirut during the recent war," said Michael Mountain, president of Best Friends. "And thousands more strays had no food or water."

Lebanon has just one small humane society – Beirut for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (BETA) – serving the entire country, and all three of their shelters were damaged during the bombing raids. The cats and dogs were evacuated to a small farm in the hills outside of Beirut, but there was no cat food anywhere in the country, and there were even threats to poison the dogs. The Best Friends rescue mission was a response to a cry for help from the small group of brave people who continued their efforts to rescue pets, donkeys and horses, and zoo animals even during the height of hostilities.

"Our staff and volunteers are working at the shelter outside of Beirut," said Mountain. "And we've already had lots of adoption offers. These orphaned pets will be coming to Best Friends Animal Sanctuary for complete health and behavior evaluations, and then they'll be off to their new homes. Adoption applications are on our website at [www.bestfriends.org](http://www.bestfriends.org)."

The Best Friends effort parallels what the society did just a year ago in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina when it brought more than 6,000 animals out of the disaster zone and to new homes.

"By bringing these homeless pets to this country, we're enabling the good people at BETA to rebuild their shelters and re-start their rescue work," said Mountain.

Best Friends has also been assisting humane groups in Israel, where people were also evacuated without their pets. But the major crisis for animals has been in Lebanon.

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Best Friends Animal Society operates the largest sanctuary for homeless animals, and provides adoption, spay/neuter, and educational programs nationwide. For more information, go to [www.bestfriends.org](http://www.bestfriends.org).