

《墨西哥保护动物新法律：禁止动物马戏表演》

Tigers jumping through flames, horses rearing elegantly and elephants standing on their hind legs - animals have played a large role in Mexican circuses for generations.

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But not for much longer, with Mexico's government banning the use of animals in performances last month.

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Lawmakers in the Latin American country have given acts a year to adapt to the law, so the animal shows will go on for the time being - as these incredible pictures show.

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These images, taken at a circus in Mexico City, show just how large a part animals play in Mexican performances.

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Tigers are seen jumping through fiery rings and dancing with matadors, all to the applause of the audience.

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Meanwhile elephants and horses are both seen rearing on their hind legs, as animals perform alongside Mexicans in a tradition that dates back more than 200 years.

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But animal rights activists say the creatures are mistreated, leading them to celebrate the incoming change in the law.

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However, performers dispute this, saying the creatures are born and raised in the circuses they perform in and do not know another way of life.

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Armando Cedeno, president of the Mexican circus association, said 50,000 circus employees could lose their jobs, and as many as 3,500 would be affected by the changes.

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He said: 'It is impossible to take these animals back to their natural habitat, because they would die.'

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Circus performers took to the streets of Mexico City to protest against the law, holding public shows without animals to highlight what performances will look like this time next year.

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The animals are well fed, cleaned and cared for, the performers claim.

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Any circuses found to be flouting the ban could be fined up to \$70,000 and animals will be seized.

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The ban is the latest in a wave of animal rights legislation passed in Latin American countries.

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Six Mexican states have already banned the use of animals in the circus, as do South American countries, Bolivia, Peru, Paraguay and Colombia.

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Bullfighting is still legal in most countries, but some campaigners have called for it to end in Mexico.

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Parts of Ecuador do not allow the final killing of the bull to take place in front of an audience.

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