

HIDDEN TORTURE - Harrowing pics expose abused elephant's emaciated body that's normally hidden

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An old and fragile-looking elephant is being "tortured" by her owners in Sri Lanka who hide the 70-year-old giant's emaciated body with a colourful festival costume. Tikiri is shackled every night while joining a parade at the Perahera Festival, one of the oldest and grandest of all Buddhist festivals featuring fire-breathers, dancers and lavishly decorated elephants.

Starving Tikiri is one of 60 elephants working at a festival in Sri Lanka, despite being in poor health, with her skin rubbed raw

No one sees her bony body or her weakened condition, because of her costume, says Save Elephant Foundation

Save Elephant Foundation (sic), set up by Thailand's "elephant whisperer" Lek Chailert, has shared horrific photos of starving Tikiri which shows every rib in her body, and raw-looking skin on her trunk.

She's so skinny that bones protrude through her skin - including her spine.

Posting the images on Facebook, the charity explained: "This is Tikiri, a 70 year old ailing female.

"She is one of the 60 elephants who must work in the service of the Perahera Festival in Sri Lanka this year.

"Tikiri joins in the parade early every evening until late at night every night for ten consecutive nights, amidst the noise, the fireworks, and smoke.

"She walks many kilometres every night so that people will feel blessed during the ceremony.

"No one sees her bony body or her weakened condition, because of her costume.

"No one sees the tears in her eyes, injured by the bright lights that decorate her mask; no one sees her difficulty to step as her legs are short-shackled while she walks.

"For a ceremony, all have the right to belief as long as that belief does not disturb or harm another.

"How can we call this a blessing, or something holy, if we make other lives to suffer [sic]?"

The charity wants Tikiri to be released from her 'suffering'

With August 12 celebrating World Elephant Day, the charity added: "We cannot bring a peaceful world to the elephant if we still think that this image is acceptable.

"To love, to do no harm, to follow a path of kindness and compassion, this is the Way of Buddha. It is time to follow."

The foundation runs a sanctuary for rescued elephants, and has rescued hundreds of the gentle giants from Thailand and other countries.

It said that Tikiri works at the Tooth temple in Kandy city and is in constant service for the temple ceremony, in which she is draped in colourful costume, covering her emaciated frame.

The foundation has urged people to write to Sri Lanka's Prime Minister, Ranil Wickremesinghe, to "end this cruelty".

It added: "We need your continued support and your voice to stop the abuse and slavery of these majestic giants.

"Let's use World Elephant Day to be the voice for the voiceless."

Photos of Tikiri prompted Linda Sheen to comment: "To have this beautiful creature treated and used in such a despicable way shows that humans really do think they are the superior race."

Krista Lodahl agreed, saying: "How heartbreaking. I can't believe they do this to her she is so old, skinny and fragile.

"She needs love and rest desperately I pray she can get released this is torture."

Diane Jackson added: "This is a disgraceful act of utter cruelty and neglect!"

Others urged that the "poor underfed darling" be rescued.

A spokesperson for the Sacred Tooth Relic, a Buddhist temple, told Metro that while hosting such festivals they "always care about the animals".

They said that a vet has seen Tikiri.

70-year-old Tikiri is in shocking condition, and can be seen short-shackled, above

- The Sun