

Call them ‘free dogs’

Sara rejects term ‘stray,’ choosing language shaped by compassion, care and hope

Hasan Barakat
TDT | Manama

She refuses to call them stray or street dogs. For Sara, they are free dogs.

In an exclusive interview with The Daily Tribune, she explained that it is a choice of words reflecting a journey shaped by compassion, loss and quiet defiance.

Sara is an engineer who arrived in Bahrain in 2015 to work with a company implementing Gulf support projects. One of the largest was the East Hidd housing project.

As construction began, she noticed female dogs seeking shelter among unfinished villas, giving birth in corners meant for families yet to come.

She began feeding the mothers so they could nurse their puppies, vaccinating them, and later finding adopters once the puppies were strong enough.

Pandemic

By 2020, during the Covid 19 pandemic, the number of dogs increased sharply.

Births multiplied and Sara continued feeding them daily.

One morning, she arrived to find the puppies gone and their mother visibly distressed.

After asking around, she learned that a private company had captured them and relocated them to an industrial area known as Askar or Ras Zuweid.

She drove there and was confronted by scenes she still struggles to describe. Emaciated and sick dogs drinking polluted water out of desperation.

From that day, she committed herself to visiting Askar every Friday to feed and treat them, alongside continuing her work in East Hidd.

Violence

On New Year’s Eve 2020, after residents began moving into East Hidd, a man attacked her while she was feeding dogs near unfinished homes.

He threw stones at her and the animals, broke water containers and removed the food.

After she posted the incident on TikTok, he filed a complaint against her and she was banned



from entering the area.

The following day, one of the dogs she had raised from birth

was found killed. No action was taken despite a report.

Two days later, more than



Sara chooses to see freedom and dignity in dogs others simply label as abandoned



Sara not only feeds dogs outside but also cares for 15 in her own home.

200 dogs disappeared from East Hidd. She was told they had been moved to Askar.

Rescue

Since then, Sara has continued her work in Askar, where she also found abandoned pedigree dogs including Huskies and Arabian Salukis.

Five Salukis were adopted and sent to the United States and Canada with the help of a friend.

She now cares for 15 dogs in her own home. All food and treatment are paid for from her own pocket.

Her proposal to authorities calls for sterilisation campaigns supported by veterinary clinics, with costs offset through tax deductions.

In December and January alone, more than 50 puppies were born in Askar.

Intention

For Sara, the reason is simple. Love, mercy and the belief that animals understand intention.

As she says, a dog knows whether the person in front of it comes to feed or to harm.

Woman acquitted of unlicensed contracting accusation



Rehab Mohammad
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The High Criminal Appeals Court has acquitted a Bahraini woman of practicing contracting without a license and overturned a first-instance ruling that had fined her BD1,000.

Lawyer Tharallah Saleem said his client had previously been convicted, along with another defendant, of engaging in commercial activity without a license.

A judgment issued in absentia and later upheld by the appeals court had imposed a fine of 1,000 dinars.

Saleem explained that the case began when his client’s friend, the complainant, asked her to help find a contractor to build a second floor at her home.

The defendant contacted a contractor she had dealt with before and acted only as a mediator between the two parties.

He said his client received part of the payment from her friend and delivered it to the contractor, stressing that her role was limited to transferring the money and that she did not practice the profession, participate in the work, or share in the project.

Tubli Bay stench traced to ‘sewage and decay’

● No sign of red tide recorded in recent years

Mohammed Darwish
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The stench reported along Tubli Bay last summer was driven by sewage inflows, poor water renewal and decomposing organic matter, not a red tide, the Supreme Council for Environment has told MPs.

Replying to a parliamentary question from MP Khalid Buanaq, the council said it had not recorded any sign of red tide in the bay and had received no reports of such an event in recent years.

It added that red or brown water can sometimes be caused by a natural bloom of microscopic algae, and that colour on its own does not prove chemical pollution.

Suspected cases are normally checked through sampling and lab tests, it said.



Tubli Bay

The council said Tubli Bay is an environmental site of national importance that has faced years of strain.

Changes to the shoreline over decades have cut the area of open water and reduced the bay’s ability to dilute pollutants. Smells, it said, rise and fall with the season, the tide and wind direction.

Odours

It linked the odours to three main drivers.



MP Khalid Buanaq

The first is pressure from wastewater entering through

the sewage network.

The second is weak circulation in parts of the bay, which slows natural flushing and helps organic matter settle on the seabed.

The third is the build-up of algae, plant material and organic sediments along shorelines and in corners where the water barely moves.

In hot weather those deposits break down faster, releasing strong-smelling gases.

Higher nutrient levels, in-

cluding nitrogen and phosphorus, can also feed heavier algal growth, followed by further decay.

Structures

The council said structures around the bay, including roads, bridges, breakwaters and other works, can add to the problem by limiting water exchange and leaving pockets where renewal is slow.

During August 2025, after complaints and posts on social media about smells, council teams carried out field checks in the bay area.

They found algae and sediments gathered in a number of spots, mainly along shorelines and in bends and corners where flow is weak.

The council said it worked with other bodies to clear affected areas and carry out on-the-ground treatment, with follow-up aimed at stopping a repeat of organic build-up along the shore.

95mln cubic metres of treated water produced in 2025: Al Farea

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The Ministry of Works recorded more than 95 million cubic metres of treated water production in 2025, reflecting Bahrain’s expanding investment in water sustainability and environmental protection, according to Assistant Undersecretary for Sanitary Engineering Engineer Fathi Abdullah Al Farea.

Al Farea said the treated wa-



Eng. Fathi Abdullah Al Farea

ter output was achieved using advanced filtration and disin-

fection technologies that align with leading international environmental standards.

He noted that wastewater received by the ministry is processed at treatment plants through integrated physical, chemical and biological methods to ensure safe reuse.

The assistant undersecretary explained that treated water is reused for designated purposes including agriculture, street landscaping and controlled irrigation.

Plan to place event halls under Sunni Waqf

Mohammed Darwish
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A plan to shift all event halls in Bahrain under the Sunni Waqf directorate is being prepared by Southern Municipal Council member Mohammed Darraj, who says the move would tighten oversight of hall revenues and prevent management from remaining in private hands and, in some cases, passing to heirs.

Darraj, representative of the Fourth Constituency in the Southern Governorate, said he would submit a proposal to transfer the running of halls

and related sites from donors or individual managers to the Sunni Waqf, arguing the authority is best placed to watch the money coming in and how it is spent.

“Those who collect the hall’s money must be under oversight for the funds coming in and what they are doing,” he said, adding that the Sunni Waqf directorate “is the competent authority and bears this responsibility”.

He said the change would also make booking simpler for residents by removing the need to chase a single person who may be hard to reach.