



TAFFY, a collie mix, stands outside Parliament June 4 during a protest by dog-lovers while the government presented its Dangerous Dogs Bill. REUTER-KYODO PHOTO

steroids and toned on treadmills. Cats and badgers are used to make the dogs savage.

In south London, youths have crossed pit bulls with mastiffs or rottweilers to produce the dreaded Bandog.

Small children are particularly at risk because the dogs may mistake them for canine opponents.

In May, Rukhsana Khan, aged 6, was savaged by a pit bull which chewed through her chest and her face as she played in a park, prompting the government to act.

The new British laws now mean pit bulls must be neutered, and muzzled and leashed in public. Owners must take out a license and third-party insurance, and trade in the dogs is banned.

The legislation is "designed to rid our country of the pit bull terrier altogether," said Home Secretary Kenneth Baker.

Baker was deterred, however, among others by the RSPCA, from ordering the immediate death of all such animals.

Devotees of dogfighting, who sell videos of the fights, defend their pastime.

"Their little tails are going all the time. They love it," said one. "It's not as bad as bullfighting. Whoever heard of a bull winning?"