

guardian.co.uk

Eight hunting dogs savage New Zealand jogger

- Victim undergoes nine hours of surgery
- Woman, 29, arrested and dogs destroyed

Associated Press

guardian.co.uk, Tuesday 4 August 2009 13.01 BST

A [larger](#) | [smaller](#)



Animal control officers Eric Teukura, right, and Kerry Beckett capture a dog near Putaruru, New Zealand, today after the attack on Margit Christensen, 36. Photograph: Sarah Ivey/AP

A jogger in [New Zealand](#) was airlifted to hospital with multiple bite wounds after eight pig-hunting dogs attacked her as she ran past a rural property on North Island.

Margit Christensen, 36, suffered scores of bites to her scalp, arms and legs before the dogs ran off. Rescue services flew her by helicopter to Waikato hospital, where she had nine hours of surgery overnight, Dr John Bonning, an emergency specialist, said.

"There were serious injuries pretty much all over her body," said Sergeant Jason Shailer, of Te Awamutu police in central North Island.

Christensen's husband, Sven, said a friend was cycling nearby when she heard the mother-of-two screaming.

"She was screaming with three dogs on her, trying to kick them off, when another five or so dogs came flying across and she fell to the ground," he told Radio New Zealand.

The friend alerted a neighbour and called Sven, who got to the scene before medical help arrived.

"By the time I got there the dogs were off ... Margit was basically just sitting. She looked like a big blob of blood on the side of the road."

He said the dogs' owner had helped drive the pack off his wife. "She kept whacking them with sticks and they kept trying to come back and come back, and then she managed get them off."

Margit Christensen told Bonning that she curled into a foetal position to protect herself during the 15-minute attack – a move that saved her life.

"She was the most seriously injured person that has been injured by dog bites I have ever seen. She had injuries all over her body – to her arms, her neck, her back, her legs and it sounds like an absolutely horrific attack," he told the radio network.

"Blood loss is certainly a way you can die from injuries such as these," he added.

Christensen was in a stable condition after extensive surgery, but Bonning said she needs many skin graft operations.

Police said the dogs had been seized and destroyed after their owner signed a destruction order.

A 29-year-old woman has been arrested and faces eight charges of owning a dog that caused injury. She was released on police bail to appear in court next week, Shailer said. Her name was not released.

The mauling follows a similar attack on a teenage cyclist a year ago by four pig-hunting dogs that bit the 13-year-old more than 100 times. He was saved when a passing motorist pulled him into her car.

A woman and a man have died in separate dog attacks in recent years and several children have been badly mauled. New Zealand dog control laws have been stiffened to require the destruction of animals involved.

guardian.co.uk © Guardian News and Media Limited 2009