

Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting

Promoting Ethical Practices in Medicine

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Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to you on behalf of the nonprofit organization *Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting* (DAFOH), an international group of health care professionals that is working to raise awareness about a very urgent topic in medical ethics. With advances in transplant medicine over the past decades, countless patients worldwide have received the gift of life-saving interventions. However, the severe shortage of donor organs worldwide – coupled with their increasing demand – has led to unethical organ procurement practices and organ trafficking in many parts of the world. In this letter, we focus our attention on China, a country where accumulating evidence suggests that unethical organ harvesting practices of horrific proportions are taking place today in detention centers and hospitals. These crimes constitute one of the greatest violations of medical ethics of our time, the scope of which has not been seen since the Holocaust.

Since the late 1980s it has been known that the Chinese government condones the use of organs from executed prisoners. Because of a cultural reluctance in Asian countries to donate organs and the lack of a public organ donation program, 95% of the organs (as acknowledged by the Chinese Deputy Minister of Health, Huang Jiefu, in 2006) reportedly come from executed prisoners. Such practices have been condemned by international transplant societies and human rights organizations. In recent years, mounting evidence suggests that China since 2001 has been systematically killing people to harvest their organs for transplantation purpose. Most of the victims are innocent or prisoners of conscience. Given this evidence, we must consider this new form of organ harvesting, which we term “forced organ harvesting,” to be yet another form of persecuting a particular group of victims, as well as supporting the lucrative and growing transplant business in China.

The most comprehensive investigation into these allegations (<http://investigation.go.saveinter.net/>) was first published in July 2006 by Messrs. David Kilgour (former Canadian Secretary of State to Asia-Pacific) and David Matas (renowned human rights lawyer) from Canada, who concluded that these practices were unfortunately true, and constitute “a form of evil not seen before on this planet”. According to their report, there is a great discrepancy between the number of executions and the number of organ transplants done in China over the past six years, with over 41,000 organs unaccounted for. Many pieces of incriminating evidence support the authors’ conclusion that these organs come almost exclusively from live Falun Gong prisoners of conscience (Falun Gong is a popular Chinese qigong practice; <http://www.fofg.org/>). Evidence includes interviews with various eyewitnesses from China, investigative calls to Chinese hospitals where medical staff have admitted to having Falun Gong organs available for immediate transplantation, and marketing websites from China (<http://en.zoukiishoku.com/>) that are especially geared to foreigners, written in multiple languages, and guarantee availability of a matching organ within two to three weeks. In addition, many Falun Gong practitioners previously in Chinese labor camps have testified to having been subjected to extensive medical testing and blood drawing while in detention. These tests seem to have been administered not with the intention to promote the practitioners’ health, but rather to serve as the means by which the Chinese government has created a large data bank of blood type and tissue factors from the thousands of prisoners of conscience in labor camps. As a result, such prisoners of conscience can be killed on demand if their organs are a potential match.

It appears as if the Chinese government is abusing the medical profession by using physicians – people who have vowed to “do no harm” and safeguard life – to kill prisoners of conscience for their organs and reap the ensuing profit. In the 1930s, medical doctors in Germany were instrumental in assisting the Nazi regime to persecute the Jewish people by performing unspeakable human experiments. Unfortunately, history seems to be repeating itself on an even larger scale. China has repeatedly stated they would stop the organ trade; yet organ trafficking has become an essential part in financing hospitals and the entire healthcare system in China, and there is now little incentive for it to stop. We therefore expect these crimes to continue until the rest of the world and the medical community worldwide take an active role in ending these crimes.

At *Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting*, we believe that this is not strictly a “Chinese problem,” but an international problem that should concern every medical organization and healthcare professional. We call for an end of these unethical medical practices in China and ask for your support in helping us inform medical doctors worldwide. Our efforts will reach out not only to the medical community, but also to other NGOs, government officials, and the general public to raise awareness about this problem and request further investigations into the already accumulated evidence.

There are many ways you can help us achieve these goals. We invite you to submit a statement, either personal or from your organization, opposing these forced organ harvesting practices. We will then, with your approval, consider your statement for posting to our website.

Even a simple statement can have a large impact. By actively speaking out against these crimes, you will help save the lives of innocent people, you will help spark the conscience of the medical community, and you will help safeguard the reputation and dignity of the medical profession.

We would like to keep you informed of our progress and any new developments, and ask you to let us know whether you wish to receive further mailings. Lastly, we welcome any suggestions you may have for us.

Thank you for taking the time to read about this important and urgent issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tobias Weg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tobias" and the last name "Weg" clearly distinguishable.

Spokesman DAFOH