

MEDICAL GENOCIDE

HIDDEN MASS MURDER IN CHINA'S ORGAN TRANSPLANT INDUSTRY



CHINA ORGAN HARVEST
RESEARCH CENTER

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When one thinks of China, one may picture its tremendous economic growth and its status as an emerging superpower. It is playing an increasingly large role in global trade and geopolitics, drawing large amounts of foreign investment into its lucrative markets.

There is another, hidden side of China—one that many observers in the West have been reluctant to talk about since the Tiananmen Square Massacre in 1989. We are referring to China’s role as one of the world’s foremost violators of human rights.

The Communist Party has used every field in society to carry out its repressive policies and maintain its rule, often using violent means. The medical field is no exception. The 1970s saw the first recorded case of doctors harvesting organs from a political prisoner during execution; her kidney was transplanted into the son of a senior party cadre. These abuses were turned on Uyghurs in the 1990s.

The list of groups labeled as “enemies of the state” continued to grow. Under party doctrine, these populations were to be used as resources for the state. To this end, they were systematically demonized and dehumanized in the eyes of the Chinese public.

But no group has suffered more at the hands of the Chinese Communist Party than practitioners of Falun Gong, a spiritual and meditation practice of self-improvement based on the principles of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance. The practice attracted a following of more than 70 million in China. Since 1999, a great many among their number have disappeared without a trace.

Meanwhile, China’s organ transplantation industry saw explosive growth. Just a few years later, over 1,000 hospitals in China were performing transplants, performing tens of thousands of transplants a year. Evidence that has emerged over the past decade shows that the state has killed and harvested organs from not only convicted death-row prisoners but also prisoners of conscience to meet the rapidly growing demand for organs.

This publication introduces the decade of research and evidence that show the true scale and severity of these crimes.

Governments, institutions, businesses, and individuals in the international community all have important roles in stopping this ongoing atrocity.

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China's Organ Transplantation Industry

Over the past decade, reports have emerged that the Chinese government is killing prisoners of conscience to supply its vast, lucrative organ transplantation industry. Researchers have uncovered new evidence and figures mined from a variety of sources that reveal the true nature and scale of these abuses.

On June 22, 2016, three independent investigators—former Canadian Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific David Kilgour, Canadian human rights lawyer David Matas, and London-based investigative journalist Ethan Gutmann—published *Bloody Harvest/The Slaughter: An Update*, a 680-page report illustrating a state-driven industry that transplants far more organs—by an order of magnitude—than can be accounted for by officially acknowledged organ sources, which China says are limited to executed death-row prisoners and voluntary donors.

The new report concludes:

Based on government-imposed minimum capacity requirements, the 169 approved transplant hospitals could have conducted 60,000 to 100,000 transplants per year, in contrast to its official claim of 10,000 per year. These hospitals had the capacity to perform more than one million transplants since 2000. More than 1,000 hospitals applied for permits in 2007 to continue performing transplants.

The main source of the massive volume of organs are primarily practitioners of Falun Gong, as well as Uyghurs, Tibetans, and House Christians.

Organ pillaging in China is a crime directed by the Communist Party and carried out by the military, state institutions, hospitals, and transplant professionals.

Israel, Spain, Italy, and Taiwan have passed laws restricting their citizens from traveling to China to receive organ transplants from illicit sources.

The U.S. House of Representatives and the European Parliament have passed resolutions (H.Res.343 and 2013/2981(RSP), respectively) condemning the practice. Hearings have been held by the U.S. Congress, the British Parliament, the European Parliament, and the Canadian Parliament.

The story of China's killing for organs is beginning to gain traction across media outlets all over the world.

“The [Communist] regime’s ghoulish and inhumane practice of robbing individuals of their freedom, throwing them in labor camps or prisons, and then executing them and harvesting their organs for transplants is way beyond the pale of comprehension and must be opposed universally and ended unconditionally.”

—Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, U.S. Congresswoman (R-FL)



A Decade-Long Investigation

The issue first came to light in March 2006, when a woman claimed that as many as 4,000 Falun Gong practitioners had been killed for their organs at the hospital where she worked. Her husband, a surgeon at the same hospital outside the city of Shenyang in Northeast China, had disclosed to her that he had removed corneas from the living bodies of more than 2,000 Falun Gong practitioners between 2000 and 2001.



On April 20, 2006, the witness appeared at a rally in front of the White House and publicly exposed the forced organ harvesting taking place in China.

In response, David Kilgour and David Matas launched an independent investigation. After months of research, including undercover interviews with doctors throughout 12 provinces in China, they came to “the regrettable conclusion that the allegations are true.” Kilgour and Matas later compiled their findings in the book *Bloody Harvest*.

Starting at around the same time, investigative journalist Ethan Gutmann spent seven years doing his own research. He reached similar conclusions in his book *The Slaughter: Mass Killings, Organ Harvesting, and China’s Secret Solution to Its Dissident Problem*.

Over the past decade, we investigated hundreds of transplant hospitals in China, uncovered and summarized huge quantities of data, as well as relevant policy directives that affect the growth of the transplant industry in China. Drawing upon media reports, official statements, medical journals, hospital websites, and web archives, we found that China’s transplant industry had become the most prolific in the world in just a few years despite the lack of an effective organ donation system. Furthermore, the industry continued to grow after live organ harvesting gained international attention in 2006.

“Across China, a gruesome trade in human organs is taking place on a mass scale. Like something out of a horror movie, livers, kidneys, hearts, lungs, and corneas are being cut out from prisoners of conscience while they are still alive. If anything proves the meaning of the term ‘crime against humanity,’ it is this bloody, ghoulish practice.”

—Benedict Rogers, Deputy Chair of the U.K. Conservative Party Human Rights Commission



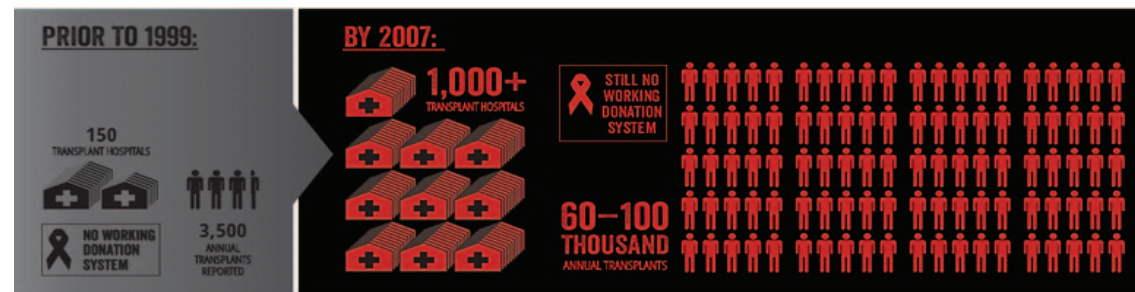
David Kilgour, David Matas and Ethan Gutmann published a new report in June 2016 on the continuation and scale of China’s organ harvesting.

China's On-Demand Organ Transplant System

RAPID GROWTH OF CHINA'S TRANSPLANT INDUSTRY SINCE 2000

China began to conduct research and clinical experiments in human organ transplantation in the 1960s. It was not until 2000 that the industry entered a period of tremendous growth.

Before 1999, there were 150 transplant institutions in mainland China. In 2007, more than 1,000 hospitals applied for permits from the Ministry of Health to continue performing transplants. The surge in transplants, while mostly absorbed by the domestic population and accompanied by a corresponding boom in transplant tourism from other countries, made China a global center for those in need of new vital organs.



Explosive development of China's organ transplant industry after 1999

“The year 2000 was a watershed ... the number of liver transplants in 2000 reached 10 times that of 1999. By 2005, the number had tripled further.”

—He Xiaoshun, a member of the Expert Committee of the Human Organ Donation Commission and vice president of the First Affiliated Hospital of Zhongshan University

SHORT WAITING TIMES

Most patients in other countries with advanced healthcare capabilities and well-organized organ donation and allocation systems have to wait years for a transplant. In China, waiting times for kidney and liver transplants were commonly listed in weeks.

China's Liver Transplant Registry System indicated in 2005 and 2006 that more than 25% of cases were emergency transplants, for which organs were found within days or even hours.

ABUNDANT ORGAN SUPPLIES

A hospital advertised “donors seeking matched recipients” and promised, “in case of failure, to continue to perform transplants until successful.”

There are recorded cases of doctors excising several organs (8 sets of kidneys in one case) for one patient before a match was found. Some patients received second, third, or even fourth transplants.

There are numerous reports of surgical teams performing transplants around the clock and hospitals performing 10, 20, or even more transplants in a single day, sometimes carried out concurrently.

Extensive lists of transplant types and their fees were openly posted on hospital websites.

“There is credible evidence that Chinese prisoners of conscience are murdered on demand for their organs, in a process of reverse matching not practiced anywhere else in the world. In most countries with well-regulated deceased donor programs, legally and ethically procured organs from a dying person are offered to recipients on the waiting list who are the best ‘match’ for the available organs. In China, this process is turned on its head. Wealthy recipients are matched against a large pool of prisoners, with the best matched prisoner scheduled for execution at the convenience of surgeon and recipient.”

—Wendy Rogers, Professor of Clinical Ethics, and Deputy Director of the Macquarie University Research Centre for Agency, Values and Ethics

A Very Large Volume of Transplants

CONTINUED GROWTH

AFTER INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION IN 2006

After the harvesting of organs from non-consenting prisoners received international attention in 2006, the Ministry of Health implemented a new approval system for transplant hospitals. Among the 1,000 that applied, 169 eventually received permits to continue performing transplants.

Our research found that, while some smaller, unapproved institutions either reduced or stopped transplant operations, others that could still obtain organs continued to operate. Large, approved institutions achieved even greater growth with decreased competition. Thus, the industry as a whole has continued to grow steadily since 2006.

Hospitals have added transplant beds, opened new wards, and moved into new buildings.

Huang Jiefu, a top transplant official, has announced plans to increase the number of qualified transplant hospitals from 169 to 300 and even 500 within a few years.

“Our country’s liver transplantation business has entered a period of stable development. The liver transplant business at First Affiliated Hospital of Zhejiang University is flourishing. It moved into a new building in 2007. Liver transplantation has become more systematic, professional, and large-scale.”

—Website of the Liver Transplant Center of the First Affiliated Hospital of Zhejiang University

ACTUAL VOLUME

ORDER OF MAGNITUDE GREATER THAN OFFICIAL FIGURE

The investigators found that China performs the most transplants of any nation in the world. Since 2000, the U.S. has performed an average of approximate 6,000 liver transplants a year. In China, this figure is matched by just a few hospitals. Tianjin Oriental Organ Transplant Center, for instance, has more than 500 dedicated transplant beds.

Based on government-imposed minimum capacity requirements for transplant centers and other data, the 169 Ministry-approved transplant hospitals could have conducted 60,000 to 100,000 transplants per year. Thus, these 169 approved hospitals had the capacity to perform more than one million total transplants since 2000.

China’s official figure of 10,000 transplants per year is surpassed by just a few hospitals. However, even this is far from the full picture. More than 1,000 hospitals applied for permits in 2007 to continue performing transplants. This suggests they also met the Ministry’s minimum capacity requirements for transplant centers it certifies. Many of them continued to perform transplants despite not having received approval.



This 17-story organ transplantation building at Oriental Organ Transplant Center at Tianjin First Central Hospital opened in 2006 with 500 dedicated transplant beds.

Unidentified Organ Sources

Traditional Chinese custom requires bodies to be preserved intact after death. China did not start piloting organ donation systems until 2010, and a national system was not established until late 2013. Nevertheless, two years later, it still had not produced donations on any meaningful scale.

The international community generally believes that the number of death-row executions in China has decreased since 2000, when it was around 10,000 per year. In addition, the government promised to stop using organs from death-row prisoners beginning in 2015.

Therefore, since the year 2000, when the Chinese organ transplant system began to take off, the organ sources identified by the government—voluntary donors and executed death-row prisoners—account for only a small fraction of all transplants performed in China.

“We carry out kidney transplants from living sources. It’s completely different from cadaveric kidney transplants ...”

—Archived web page of the China International Transplantation Network Assistance Center



Falun Gong practitioners unfurl banners on Tiananmen Square to protest the persecution. The banners read “Truthfulness, Compassion, Tolerance.”

THE VICTIMS

The investigators observed tremendous development in China’s human organ transplant industry after 1999. This growth coincided with the start of the Chinese Communist Party’s campaign to wipe out Falun Gong.

Falun Gong is a meditation practice based on ancient Chinese traditions of health and self-improvement, and the principles of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance. By the end of the 1990s, the government estimated that over 70 million people were practicing Falun Gong, a figure quoted by several Western news media.



Falun Gong practitioners meditate in Muxidi, Beijing before the persecution began in 1999

The former Communist Party leader Jiang Zemin saw the group’s popularity and revival of traditional values as a threat to his rule, and launched a violent campaign to “bankrupt them financially, ruin their reputations, destroy them physically.”

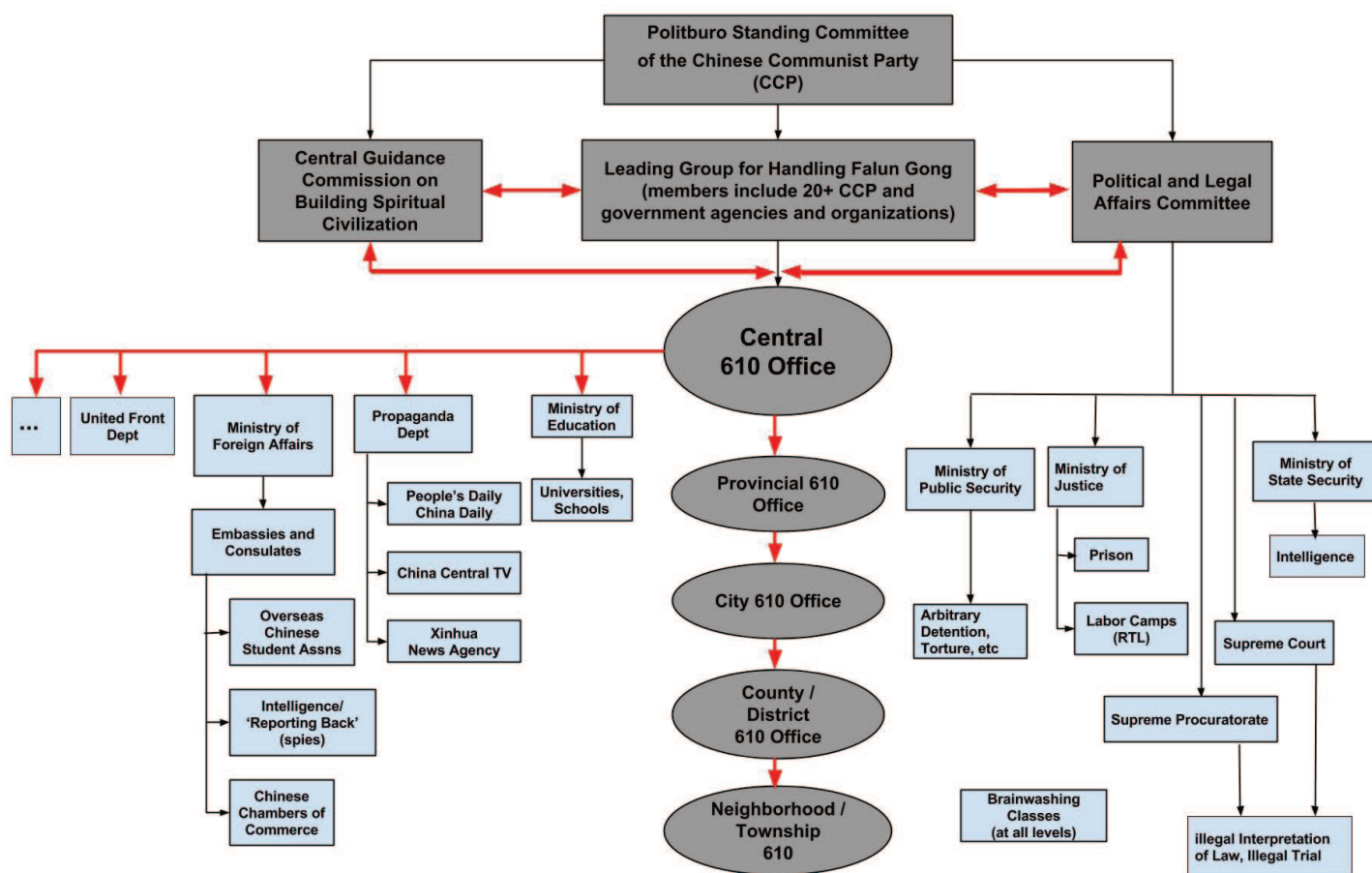
Millions of Falun Gong practitioners from around China traveled to Beijing to appeal to the central government, only to be arrested and tortured. When many were unwilling to disclose their identities to protect their families and friends, they became part of a large anonymous population held captive by the state. More practitioners were rounded up all across China. Those who refused to renounce their faith began to disappear without a trace.

A State-Driven Crime

The researchers observed that, since 2000, the Chinese regime has prioritized organ transplantation in its national strategy and invested heavily in research, development, industrialization, and personnel training in transplantation technology.

China's national plans, programs, and foundations have incorporated a large number of projects related to organ transplantation. The vast majority of medical universities and their affiliated transplant centers, both military and civilian, received significant funding from all levels of government.

On June 10, 1999, the central Communist Party leadership created the "610 Office," an ad hoc agency directly under the Central Committee and dedicated to carrying out the systematic eradication of Falun Gong. With a structure extending from top to bottom throughout the Party, government, and military, it is endowed with extraordinary and extralegal power.



610 Office and Political and Legal Affairs Committee under the Chinese Communist Party

The "610 Office" and the Political and Legal Affairs Committee have the power to control personnel and resources under the Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of State Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, propaganda departments, and the fields of finance, culture, education, science and technology, and health throughout the country. The regime mobilized the entire state apparatus in its campaign against Falun Gong practitioners.

The Ministry of Health (MOH) and its successor, the National Health and Family Planning Commission (NPFPC), led the health care system in organ transplantation. In organizing, driving, and directly carrying out such activities, these agencies are fully responsible for the overall planning, policy making, regulation and management of China's human organ transplant industry and the organ donation and allocation system.

The General Logistics Department of the People's Liberation Army was authorized as the core unit to lead every level of the military to eradicate the practice of Falun Gong. The military was given power to manage the secret detention facilities and the entire process of live organ harvesting.

Over 100 military hospitals have become involved in organ transplantation. These include general hospitals that belong to the Central Military Commission, all military branches, the seven regional military commands, military medical universities, armed police, and numbered military hospitals. They resolve many core technical issues in organ transplantation and support civilian hospitals with living organ supplies and technical assistance.

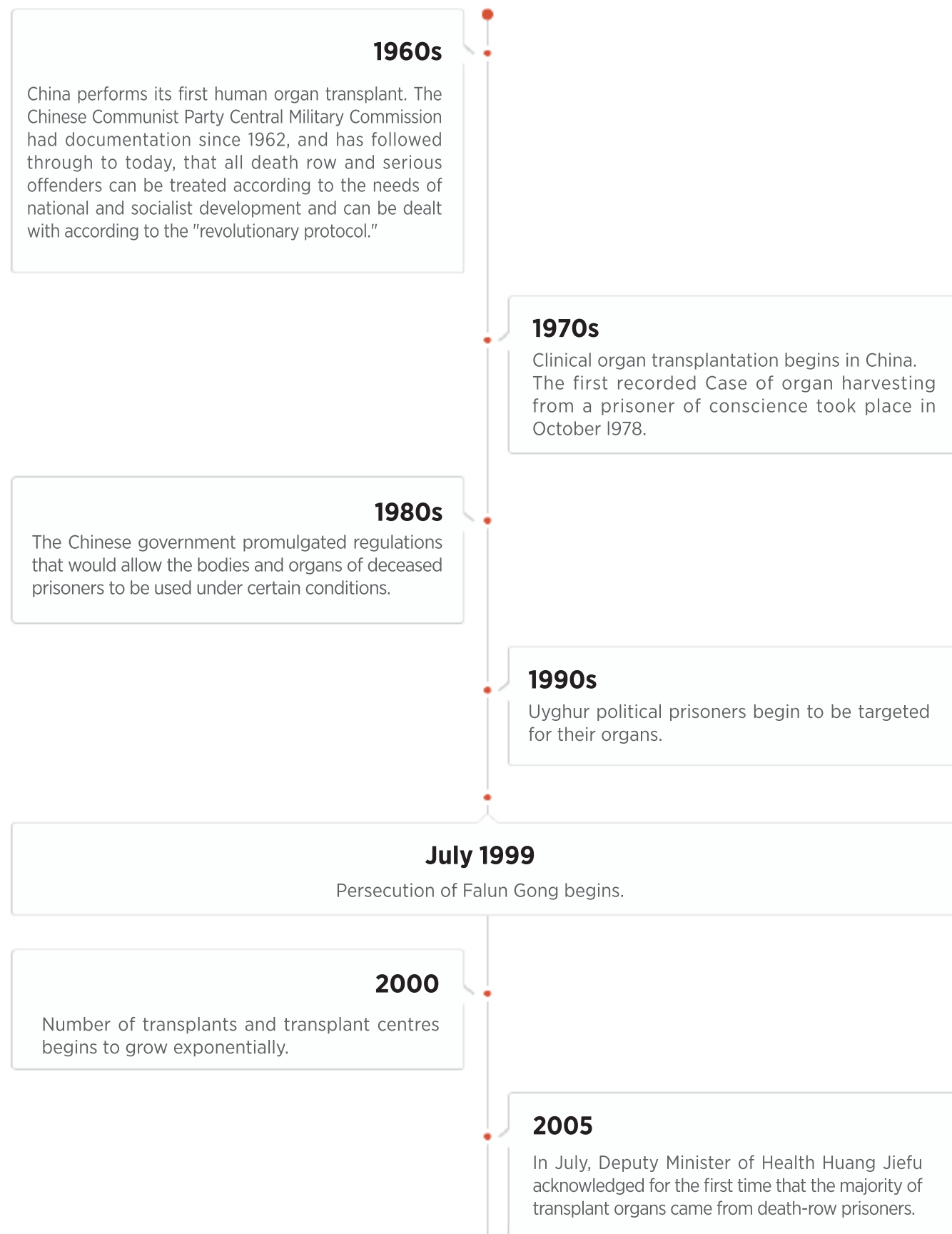
"The Communist Party's demonization and brutalization of Falun Gong and the health system's insatiable demand for organs have formed a symbiosis. Each feeding on the other, the combination became an unprecedented, and barely imaginable, human catastrophe."

—David Kilgour, David Matas, and Ethan Gutmann

The screenshot shows an archived web page from the China International Transplantation Network Assistance Center (CITNAC). The page title is "中国脏器移植实际情况" (Actual Situation of Organ Transplantation in China). The main content discusses the scale of organ transplantation in China, mentioning that over 30,000 kidney transplants have been performed in 29 provinces, cities, and autonomous regions. It also mentions the involvement of the Supreme People's Court, Supreme People's Procuratorate, Public Security system, judicial system, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Civil Affairs in promulgating laws on October 9, 1984, regarding organ procurement. The page includes a search bar, navigation links, and a date stamp of 23 SEP 2004.

Archived web page of the China International Transplantation Network Assistance Center (CITNAC)

Timeline



Myths and Facts

Myth: *Most organs are sourced from convicted death-row prisoners*

Fact: Since 2000, China's transplant volume increased dramatically, including by thirty-fold between 1999 and 2005. Based on government-imposed minimum capacity requirements, the 169 approved transplant hospitals in China could have conducted 60,000 to 100,000 transplants per year. However, international organizations estimate the number of death-row executions in China at only thousands each year, a rate that has decreased since 2000. And the government promised to stop using organs from death-row prisoners beginning in 2015.

Many sources indicate that death-row executions in China have decreased over the last two decades. Meanwhile, starting in 2000, the number of organ transplants in China grew rapidly. This divergence widened in 2007, when transplants continued to grow while death penalty numbers fell further due to new judicial review procedures. Given that the number of voluntary donors remained low and flat, this trend leaves a large gap of transplants not accounted for by the official organ sources.

Even if China has discontinued the use of organs from death-row prisoners as claimed, its extrajudicial killing of prisoners of conscience for organs continues at a far larger scale, but has never been acknowledged, much less stopped. Unfortunately, the Chinese government's public relations campaign with respect to death-row prisoners has drawn the world's attention away from its killing of innocents for their organs—a crime against humanity.

Kilgour, Matas, and Gutmann conclude in their 2016 report that the primary source of the massive volume of organs is practitioners of Falun Gong and also Uyghurs, Tibetans, and House Christians.

Myth: *China now sources organs from a voluntary donation program*

Fact: Organ transplantation in China began in the 1970s, but by 2003, the number of voluntary donations remained at zero. Impediments included cultural inhibitions and a lack of legislation for brain death and legal framework needed to facilitate voluntary donation.

Huang Jiefu stated in 2013 that he had performed more than 500 liver transplants in 2012, one of which was “the first voluntary citizen donation meeting Chinese standards.” In Shanghai, a city with 11 transplant centers approved by the Ministry of Health, the first organ donation from a deceased donor was carried out in August 2013.

There was no organ donation system in China before 2010, and a national organ donation system was not created until late 2013. Nevertheless, as of the end of 2015, China's pilot organ donation and allocation systems still have not produced donations on any meaningful scale. Compared to the huge volume of transplants performed in China, the number of voluntary donors is negligible.

Myth: *China's usage of immunosuppressants accounts for only 10,000 transplants per year*

Fact: In 2006, the domestic immunosuppressant market was nearly 10 billion RMB, and there were more than 100 manufacturers and nearly 30 varieties. Transplant hospitals in China mostly use domestic products instead of imported drugs. International drug sales data, such as IMS, also only reflects partial size of China's drug market.

Based on an average drug cost of 30,000 RMB per patient per year, this market could have supported over 300,000 total patients, or an average of 50,000 to 60,000 per year since 2000, far more than the official claim of 10,000 transplants per year.

How can doctors be made to extract organs from living people?

China started performing transplants using organs harvested from executed prisoners on a small scale in the 70s. In the years that followed, it also used organs from prisoners of conscience, Uyghurs, Tibetans and House Christians in captivity, and, in the present day, Falun Gong practitioners.

Under the Communist Party's doctrine, such prisoners are labelled as “enemies of the state” and systematically dehumanized, to be used at will as resources of the state. The seizure of organs from serious offenders was legalized by a supplementary regulation enacted in 1984.

“All the people [who] graduated from their system, they too have the same mindset; they are the product produced by the CCP. Our ideology at the time was that being able to participate in doing away with the country's enemies was a glorious thing, even genuinely believing what we were doing is for a good cause.”

–Enver Tohti, a former Uighur surgeon who was ordered to extract the organs from a living prisoner in 1995

Global Response

Governments around the world have responded to organ harvesting in China by passing legislation to restrict illicit organ tourism, as well as resolutions condemning the atrocities. Leading news outlets continue to cover the latest developments in organ harvesting in China.

LEGISLATION

Israel

Israel passed the Organ Transplant Act in 2008, which prohibits insurance companies from reimbursing costs for transplants received in other countries that violate Israeli organ trade and trafficking guidelines.

In the three years following its enactment, travel of Israeli patients to China for organ transplants stopped completely. There has also been a significant increase in domestic organ donations and registered donors.

Spain

A 2010 amendment to the Criminal Code imposed new penalties for those who promote, facilitate or advertise the procurement or illegal trafficking of human organs. It also applies to recipients consenting to receive a transplant knowing its illicit origin. The law imposes penalties of 6 to 12 years of imprisonment for vital organs and 3 to 6 years for non-vital organs.

Italy

The Italian Senate approved a bill on March 4, 2015 to introduce penalties against individuals who trade or sell illegally trafficked organs. Those who are found guilty of facilitating transactions involving organs from living people will face 3 to 12 years' imprisonment and a fine between 50,000 and 300,000 euros. Doctors who promote or facilitate illegal organ tourism face lifetime disqualification.

Senator Maurizio Romani, who proposed the bill, said, "we have the duty to make any effort in order not to be accomplices to this," referring to the sourcing of organs from prisoners of conscience, "especially practitioners of the spiritual discipline Falun Gong."

Taiwan

The Human Organ Transplantation Act of 2015 bans the sale, purchase, and brokerage of organs. It also prohibits the use of organs from executed prisoners and organ tourism, regardless of foreign laws. For transplants performed abroad, the law requires hospitals in Taiwan to document the country, hospital, and source of the donor organ.

In addition to fines, the law imposes imprisonment of 1 to 5 years for those involved in brokering organs or organ tourism. Doctors who engage in organ brokerage will have their licenses revoked.

RESOLUTIONS

United States

On June 13, 2016, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.Res.343, "Expressing concern regarding persistent and credible reports of systematic, state-sanctioned organ harvesting from non-consenting prisoners of conscience in the People's Republic of China, including from large numbers of Falun Gong practitioners and members of other religious and ethnic minority groups."

The resolution encourages the U.S. medical community to help raise awareness of unethical organ transplant practices in China. It further demands the release of all Falun Gong practitioners and other prisoners of conscience.

European Parliament

The European Parliament passed a similar resolution on December 12, 2013, which recommends that its Member States raise awareness of organ transplant abuses among their citizens travelling to China.

The resolution also calls for the prosecution of those found to have engaged in such unethical practices and for China to allow UN officials to conduct an investigation into organ transplant practices in the country.



How You Can Help

Many of us outside China can play an important role in ending these atrocities. It is our responsibility to raise awareness by every means possible in order to stop these horrific crimes from being committed against our fellow human beings.

Some countries and organizations have enacted legislation or amended policies to prevent their citizens or members from participating in unethical organ harvesting. Here's a list of actions experts recommend:

GOVERNMENTS

Publicly condemn this crime against humanity by passing a resolution (at the national, provincial, and local levels)

Prohibit the receipt of trafficked organs at home and abroad, restrict travel to China for the purpose of receiving an organ transplant from unethical or undocumented sources, and disallow reimbursement of medical costs for the same

Ban entry of individuals involved in illegal organ trafficking

Issue travel advisories to warn citizens against traveling to China for organ transplants

Prohibit pharmaceutical companies from conducting transplant field tests and clinical trials in China

Pressure the Chinese government to open all detention facilities for international inspection

Facilitate independent investigations into organ transplant abuse in China

NGOS

Urge governments to take all measures necessary to end this crime against humanity

Undertake independent investigations into forced organ harvesting in China

Incorporate efforts to raise awareness of organ harvesting crimes into the organization's projects and activities

BUSINESSES

Reduce investment in China until its government ceases illicit organ trafficking. Such investments are financing and nurturing a party-state that pillages organs from unwilling citizens for commercial purposes.

MEDICAL FIELD

Discourage patients from traveling to China for organ transplants.

Require Chinese transplant professionals to adhere to internationally accepted ethical standards as a condition to becoming members of professional societies.

Reject research or publications in journals or at conferences unless the authors clearly indicate that organs from executed prisoners or prisoners of conscience were not used in the research.

Prohibit training of Chinese transplant professionals unless they commit to not using organs from unethical sources.

Proactively remind China's government and medical profession of internationally accepted ethical standards.

Require onsite inspections of Chinese transplant centers and records by international transplant professionals.

RESEARCH, EDUCATION & MEDIA

Perform independent investigations into China's organ transplant sourcing

Integrate these crimes as current events into school curriculums

Keep the public informed of the latest developments in this topic



In 2013, nearly 1.5 million people in over 50 countries and regions signed a petition and expressed their support to call for an end to this unprecedented evil.

The China Organ Harvest Research Center is an organization committed to undertaking and presenting objective research on non-consensual organ harvesting in China. We seek, discover, translate and analyze primary sources and other evidence from Chinese sources. It is our firm belief that the non-consensual organ harvesting, especially when conducted against prisoners of conscience, is a crime against humanity and a new form of state terrorism. We feel it is our duty as citizens of the world to bring this issue to the attention of the public and to ultimately help end this barbaric practice.

We cannot achieve this goal alone. Facing such atrocities, every member of society has a duty to act—to safeguard basic morality and speak out on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves. We look forward to collaborating with other researchers, medical professionals and human rights activists to deepen our understanding of what has taken place, and what continues to take place in China today.

ChinaOrganHarvest.org   COHResearch