

# ORGAN HARVESTING SPEECH

by David Matas

Is China harvesting organs of Falun Gong practitioners, killing them in the process? A Japanese television news agency reporter and the ex-wife of a surgeon in March 2006 claimed that this was happening in Sujiatun, China. Are those claims true?

The Coalition to Investigate the Persecution of the Falun Gong in China, an organization headquartered in Washington D.C., in May asked former Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific David Kilgour and me to investigate these claims. We released a report in July 2006 and a revised report in January 2007 which came to the conclusion, to our regret and horror, that the claims were indeed true.

The repressive and secretive nature of Chinese governance made it difficult for us to assess the claims. We were not allowed entry to China, though we tried. Organ harvesting is not done in public. If the claims are true, the participants are either victims who are killed and their bodies cremated or perpetrators who are guilty of crimes against humanity and unlikely to confess.

We examined every avenue of proof and disproof available to us, thirty three in all. They were:

## **a) General considerations**

1) China is a systematic human rights violator. The overall pattern of violations makes it harder to dismiss than any one claimed violation.

2) The Government of China has reduced substantially financing of the health system. Organ transplants are a major source of funds for this system, replacing the lost government funding.

3) The Government of China has given the military the green light to raise money for arms privately. The military is heavily involved in organ transplants to raise money for itself.

4) Corruption in China is a major problem. There is huge money to be made from transplants and a lack of state controls over corruption.

#### **b) Considerations specific to organ harvesting**

5) Technology has developed to the point where organ harvesting of innocents for their organs has become possible. Developments in transplant surgery in China fall prey to the cruelty, the corruption, the repression which pervades China.

6) China harvests the organs of prisoners sentenced to death without their consent. The Falun Gong constitute a prison population who the Chinese authorities vilify, dehumanize, depersonalize, marginalize even more than executed prisoners sentenced to death for criminal offences.

7) There is no organized system of organ donations in China. There is a Chinese cultural aversion to organ donation.

8) Waiting times for organ transplants in China are incredibly short, a matter of days. Everywhere else in the world, waiting times are measured in months and years.

9) Hospital websites post self-incriminating information boasting short waiting times for all organs for big payments.

10) Donor recipients whom we have interviewed tell us about the secrecy with which transplant surgery is undertaken and the heavy involvement of the military. Information given to patients is kept to a minimum. Transplants are performed in military hospitals and, even in civilian hospitals, by military personnel.

11) There is huge money to be made in China from transplants. Prices charged to foreigners range from \$30,000.00 US for corneas to \$180,000.00 US for a liver kidney combination.

12) There are no Chinese transplant ethics separate from the laws which govern transplants. China does not have a self governing disciplinary body for transplant professionals.

13) There are huge gaps in foreign transplant ethics. It is rare for foreign transplant ethics to deal specifically with either transplant tourism or contact with Chinese transplant professionals or transplants from executed prisoners.

14) The practice of selling organs in China was legal until July 1st, 2006. Even today, the new law banning the selling of organs is not enforced.

15) Foreign transplant legislation everywhere is territorial. It is not illegal for a foreigner in any country to go to China, benefit from a transplant which would be illegal back home, and then return home.

16) Many states have travel advisories, warning their citizens of the perils in travel to one country or another. But no government has posted a travel advisory about organ transplants in China.

17) Organ transplantation surgery relies on anti-rejection drugs. China imports these drugs from the major pharmaceutical companies. No state prohibits export to China of anti-rejection drugs used for organ transplant patients.

18) Some state administered health plans pay for health care abroad in the amount that would be paid if the care were administered in the home country or pay for after care of patients who obtain transplants abroad. Where that happens, there is not, in

any country, a prohibition of payment where the patient obtains an organ transplant in China.

### **c) Considerations specific to Falun Gong**

19) The Communist Party of China, for no apparent reason other than totalitarian paranoia, sees Falun Gong as an ideological threat to its existence. Yet, objectively, Falun Gong is just a set of exercises with a spiritual component.

20) The threat the Communist Party perceives from the Falun Gong community has led to a policy of persecution. Persecution of the Falun Gong in China is officially decided and decreed.

21) Falun Gong practitioners are victims of extreme vilification. The official Chinese position on Falun Gong is that it is "an evil cult". Yet, Falun Gong shares none of the characteristics of a cult.

22) Falun Gong practitioners are victims of systematic torture and ill treatment. While the claims of organ harvesting of Falun Gong practitioners has been met with doubt, there is no doubt about this torture.

23) Falun Gong practitioners have been arrested in huge numbers. They are detained without trial or charge until they renounce Falun Gong beliefs.

24) There are thousands of named, identified Falun Gong practitioners who died as a result of torture. If the Government of China is willing to kill large number of Falun Gong practitioners through torture, it is not that hard to believe they would be willing to do the same through organ harvesting.

25) Many practitioners, in attempt to protect their families and communities, have not identified themselves once arrested. These unidentified are a particularly vulnerable

population.

26) Falun Gong practitioners in prison are systematically blood tested and physically examined. Yet, because they are also systematically tortured, this testing can not be motivated by concerns over their health.

27) Traditional sources of transplants - executed prisoners, donors, the brain dead - come nowhere near to explaining the total number of transplants in China. The only other identified source which can explain the skyrocketing transplant numbers is Falun Gong practitioners.

28) The money from organ transplants to be made has led to the creation of dedicated facilities, specializing in organ transplants. The Chinese authorities must have the confidence that there exists into the foreseeable future a ready source of organs from people who are alive now and will be dead tomorrow. Who are these people? A large prison population of Falun Gong practitioners provides an answer.

29) In a few cases, between death and cremation, family members of Falun Gong practitioners were able to see the mutilated corpses of their loved ones. Organs had been removed.

30) We had callers phoning hospitals throughout China posing as family members of persons who needed organ transplants. In a wide variety of locations, those who were called asserted that Falun Gong practitioners (reputedly healthy because of their exercise regime) were the source of the organs. We have recordings and telephone bills for these calls.

31) We interviewed the ex-wife of a surgeon from Sujiatun who had said her husband personally removed the corneas from approximately 2,000 anaesthetized Falun Gong prisoners Sujiatun hospital in Shenyang City in northeast China during the two year period before October, 2003. Her testimony was credible to us.

32) There has been two investigations independent from our own which have addressed the same question we have addressed, whether there is organ harvesting of Falun Gong practitioners in China, one by Kirk Allison of the University of Minnesota, another by European Parliament Vice President Edward McMillan-Scott. Both have come to the same conclusion we did. These independent investigations corroborate our own conclusion.

33) The Government of China has responded to the first version of our report in an unpersuasive way. Mostly, the responses have been attacks on the Falun Gong. The fact the Government of China, with all the resources and information at its disposal, resources and information we do not have, was not able to contradict our report suggests that our conclusions are accurate.

It is easy to take each element in isolation, and say that this element or that does not prove the claim. But it is their combination which led us to the chilling conclusion to which we came.

Our report has twenty five different recommendations. Virtually every precaution one can imagine to prevent the harvesting of organs of Falun Gong practitioners in China is not there. All these precautions should be put in place.

But there is one basic recommendation we make which must be implemented immediately. Organ harvesting of Falun Gong practitioners in China must stop.

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