

Forced organ harvesting in China

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
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On Monday last week, an independent tribunal based in London published its final judgement and summary report following an investigation into forced organ harvesting in the People's Republic of China (PRC).

The tribunal's members unanimously concluded that they were "certain" and "sure beyond reasonable doubt" that forced organ harvesting from prisoners — that is the removal of organs from the bodies of previously conscious and healthy inmates without their consent — continues in China "involving a very substantial number of victims."

The summary report makes for grim reading and is a chilling reminder of the true nature of the communist regime across the Taiwan Strait.

The China Tribunal, chaired by former British judge Geoffrey Nice, was commissioned by non-governmental organization the International Coalition to End Transplant Abuse in China.

Its members, a panel of legal and medical experts, found that Falun Gong practitioners — who engage in the shockingly subversive act of meditation and breathing exercises — have historically probably been the main source of organs. Beijing banned Falun Gong in 1999 after then-Chinese president Jiang Zemin (江泽民) branded the movement's then-70 million followers as members of an "evil cult," likely because he saw them as a threat to the primacy of Chinese Communist Party rule. An order was given to arrest and sentence to life in prison anyone found practicing Falun Gong.

The tribunal said that evidence of comprehensive medical testing of Uighurs incarcerated in so-called "re-education camps" in China's Xinjiang region indicates that organ harvesting might also be occurring there.

Human rights groups say that as many as 1 million Uighurs and others are incarcerated in such camps.

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There have been a number of international and non-governmental investigations over the years. However, due to the highly opaque nature of China's judicial and prison systems, amassing "smoking gun" evidence has been difficult.

As British lawmaker Fiona Bruce put it: "There are no such victims to tell their stories. That is because no one survives. It is almost a perfect crime."

However, a 2016 investigation by former Canadian secretary of state for the Asia-Pacific region David Kilgour, Canadian human rights lawyer David Matas and investigative journalist Ethan Gutmann concluded that China was operating an "industrial-scale, state-directed organ transplantation system, controlled through national policies and funding."

The China Tribunal cites evidence of recorded telephone calls by an investigator, which it is satisfied are authentic, to approximately 80 hospitals in China.

Hospitals telephoned offered organs for sale "from people who were alive at the time of the calls and that those organs were available to the callers on short notice."

The report also notes that organ transplant waiting times in China are "much shorter than usual in the rest of the world and often as little as two weeks."

The tribunal ends its report with the following words: "It is, again, no pleasure for the Tribunal to be saying it, not least because it may be an observation long overdue from responsible governments ... any who interact in any substantial way with the PRC including: doctors and medical institutions; industry and businesses ... educational establishments ... arts establishments should now recognise that they are, to the extent revealed above, interacting with a criminal state."

The tribunal's findings should focus the minds of governments around the world. China should be treated for what it is: a rogue nation and a threat to all liberal democracies.

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