

THE GOVERNMENT OF CHINA'S MOST BLOODY HARVEST

Address by Hon David Kilgour
(former Canadian Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific)
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Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,

Edward McMillan-Scott, a vice-president of the European Parliament and a member of the Coalition, for one hoped to be with us all today, but was not able to re-arrange his schedule. He and other colleagues in the EU and some national parliaments on this continent have been very effective in pressuring the government of China on the issue of organ harvesting. Three others who have been especially helpful are MEP Simon Coveney of Ireland, Finnish MP Heidi Hautala and Swedish MP Goran Lindblad.

Indeed, I'm delighted to inform you now that at the recent EU-China summit in Helsinki the organ harvesting issue was reportedly raised by direction of the EU troika leadership through the Finnish Foreign Minister Tuomioja meeting bilaterally with China's Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing. An excellent source says that the European minister encouraged the minister from the Middle Kingdom to be proactively open about the matter, which was described as attracting much attention in Europe. The visitor was also urged to seek an independent study about the allegations being made about organ harvesting in his country.

This is encouraging, of course, but let me combine it with a chilling anecdote I recently heard about the world transplant congress, which took place this summer in Boston and attracted thousands of surgeons and other specialists from around the world. After the speech to delegates from Senator Hilary Clinton, there was a large reception. A medical doctor from Germany and his wife chatted with a surgeon from Tianjin, China, who proudly told them that several hospitals in the Tianjin region are now together doing 2000 liver transplants yearly (all the hospitals in Germany combined evidently do a total of about 700 per annum). At the end of the friendly conversation, asked who the organ donors are, the surgeon replied to the couple: "Ask the [Falun Gong] demonstrators outside this hotel". Is that not as close to a "smoking scalpel" as we're likely to get in this dismaying situation?

Matas-Kilgour Report

Permit me to say a little now about the independent study on the allegations which the respected human rights lawyer, David Matas, and I completed earlier this summer. We did so at the request of the Coalition to Investigate the Persecution of Falun Gong. Here in financially conscious Switzerland, I hasten to say that we worked as volunteers.

Matas and I looked at every avenue of proof and disproof available to us. We were not permitted to enter China, although we sought visas unsuccessfully. All the evidence pointed in the same direction as our ultimate conclusion: the government of China in its hospitals, detention centres and other agencies in numerous parts of the country has over the past half decade put to death a large but unknown number of Falun Gong prisoners of conscience. Most of the victims never went near any court and were convicted of nothing; they were murdered by medical professionals.

Their vital organs, including hearts, kidneys, livers and corneas, were virtually simultaneously seized for sale at high prices, often to foreigners. Indeed, we recently learned from a good source that almost 85% of the organs transplanted in the Tianjin hospitals currently are now going to non-residents of China. Many of these patients probably hope they are getting an organ from a convicted murderer or rapist, who no longer needs it, but they should know that China has 68 offences for which one can be executed, including tax fraud. In reality, there is a good likelihood that the organ is coming from a young Falun Gong prisoner, whose crime was to believe in “truth, compassion and forbearance’ in a totalitarian governance system in which opposing values prevail.

As David Matas says, “We have a new form of evil in the world.” It makes “crimes against humanity” under the Treaty of Rome and the International Criminal Court look in some circumstances more like misdemeanors. The perpetrators of these deeds, including the doctors involved, should, of course, face the ICC as quickly as possible.

Time is short so let me mention only some of the avenues of proof we examined:

1-Inculpatory phone conversations: our callers got through to detention centres and hospitals in various parts of China, posing as family members of patients needing organs. In about 15 locations, those called indicated that they had Falun Gong practitioners available for organ harvesting.

2-The regime in China, for no apparent reason other than paranoia, sees Falun Gong as an ideological threat and since mid-1999 has made every effort to eliminate the community, which in the mid-90s numbered about 70 million across China alone. It now exists as a peaceful faith community in China and approximately 70 other countries. The government’s sudden demonization of Falun Gong in only one of these lands is all too similar to the ways the Interhamwe treated the Tutsi minority in Rwanda before and during the events there of April-June, 1994.

3-Only Falun Gong prisoners in China are examined medically on a regular basis. They are also tortured, overworked in labour camps and abused in other ways, so the tests are certainly not done out of concern for their health. More likely, it is for computer matching of their organs to patients seeking transplants. It’s of interest here that thousands of Falun Gong prisoners in the “re-education through labour” camps produce export products, including shoes, chopsticks, sweaters, Christmas decorations and

promotional products for Nestle despite the fact that the World Trade Organization(WTO) of which China is now a member bans such exports.

4-Waiting times for organ transplants in China are incredibly short-often days or weeks-when everywhere else in the world they are measured in months and years, pointing to the existence of a large computer-assisted living organ bank in China.

5-The ex-wife of a surgeon in Sujiatin hospital in a remote region of China said that he confessed to her that he removed the corneas from the eyes of approximately 2000 Falun Gong prisoners during the two year period from the end of 2001 to Oct. 2003. For that, he was paid the equivalent of hundreds of thousands of US dollars. Her testimony was credible, but to be cautious we relied on it only when it was independently corroborated.

6-Chinese hospital websites host highly-incriminating information advertising organs of all sorts and available on short notice.

7-The Chinese government is one of the world's worst human rights violators, thus making it harder to dismiss such allegations. The wide-spread corruption in the country plus the money to be made and the on-going vilification of Falun Gong practitioners are a deadly trio.

8-Allied to these factors is the reality that some hospitals appear to doing transplants in order to keep their doors open since their funding was cut. For example, \$ (US)180,000 for a liver and kidney combination goes a long way to keep a rural hospital operating when it is threatened with closure.

It is easy to say that this or that element of proof in isolation is not determinative. It is their combination that drove us to the chilling conclusion we reached. This was re-enforced by the feeble response of the Chinese government. Almost a month after our report came out, it was unable to rebut its contents except to say-correctly-that we had placed two cities in the wrong provinces.

Our report has 17 different recommendations. Virtually no precaution to prevent the harvesting of organs from Falun Gong practitioners is currently been applied. If the government is serious, all of our measures should be enacted with all deliberate speed. The first recommendation, of course, is that the harvesting practice must stop immediately.

All of us—you, me and our friends and colleagues-can together raise the heat on the government of China, thereby saving innocent lives when the order to stop the killing finally goes out from Beijing. Remember the Land Mines Treaty signed in Ottawa some years ago. Jody Williams, on receiving the Nobel Peace prize for her contribution, said that victory for the land mines ban was really achieved through emails on the Internet. Please get your own email networks working now. Together we can stop this new crime against humanity long before the Olympic Games set for 2008!