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## Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting: China attempts to dodge scrutiny on organ trade with falsehoods about US transplant practices

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**Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting →**

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 27, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- China's top transplant official is trying to divert international attention from that country's appalling organ procurement record by making false statements about the practice of transplant medicine in the United States, says Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting (DAFOH), a leading medical ethics advocacy group. According to a recent interview in the Chinese Global Times, transplant chief and former Deputy Minister of Health, Huang Jiefu, denounced the US as "the most rampant organ trade country in the world."

"Some groups, for instance poor people and refugees, will, for their livelihood, come to America and sell organs," Huang claimed in the interview, saying that in 2016, "280 foreign patients came to the US for transplants ... far more than the limit" allowed in the US. The limit regulation Huang Jiefu referred to was abolished three years ago and replaced by an obligatory transparent reporting system aimed to include every non-citizen/non-resident transplant. Yet, with 33,500 transplants performed in the US in 2016, the 280 that Huang cites as a violation would only represent a mere 0.83% of the total, far below the US guideline.

Huang also stated that the "use of death row prisoner organs was not China's innovation," but practiced first in the US. The Global Times quoted Huang as saying that during his visit to Harvard University in the 1990s, he was shown organ specimens taken from prisoners. In contrast to his claims, the provisions that permit organ harvesting from executed prisoners were legally adopted in China as early as 1984 and are believed to still be in place.

China's claims of having ended the organ harvesting from executed prisoners in 2015 remain unverified. Lack of transparency and independent scrutiny are an increasingly insurmountable obstacle for China in meeting international ethical standards. During a conference on organ trafficking at the Vatican in early February, Huang offered a scant four-slide data presentation in attempts to allay international concerns about the continued practice of harvesting organs from prisoners, including prisoners of conscience. In a semantic attempt to brush off the mass of evidence on forced organ harvesting from Falun Gong practitioners in China, Huang refuted the claims with a simple "nonsense" retort but failed to provide any counter-evidence.

Dr. Torsten Trey, DAFOH executive director, states: "We have considerable eyewitness accounts from Falun Gong practitioners of having been subjected to implausible medical exams and blood tests while in detention in China. If the claims that prisoners of conscience are used as organ source is 'nonsense', then why not allow independent international inspections in Chinese detention camps?"

Huang Jiefu has a record of making conflicting statements. In an interview with Australian ABC TV in 2013, he commented about organ harvesting from prisoners from an odd juxtaposition saying "before [the prisoner] died he found his conscience and found he needed to do something to repay society. So why do you object?" All global ethical standards condemn such practice. After an announced ban on harvesting organs from executed prisoners in 2015, Huang described death-row prisoners instead as citizens who have the right to donate organs, a gross misunderstanding not shared by the international community.

DAFOH is calling on the US medical community to repudiate China's false accusations, demand transparent access to its organ procurement and transplant system and to increase pressure on China to answer questions concerning the practice of forced organ harvesting from living prisoners of conscience.

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