



INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY WEBINAR

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Humankind at a Crossroads: Universal Human Rights versus
Commercialized Forced Organ Harvesting from Living People

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Hello there, my name is Garnett Genuis. I'm a member of Parliament from Canada. And I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today.

This is International Human Rights Day. I've always cared deeply about human rights. And in some sense, by necessity, this is my family background. You see, my grandmother was a Holocaust survivor. She was living in Germany during the Second World War. And she would explain to us the factors that allowed her to survive. She was hiding out on farms, sheltered by sympathetic people in the part of Germany she was in. And she attributed, in large part, her survival to the willingness of someone named Clemens von Galen. There's a portrait of Clemens von Galen, on the wall behind me, von Galen was a vocal critic of the Nazis. He was someone who was willing to speak out at great risk to himself and those around him to oppose the evil that was taking place. It was important for him as a person of power and privilege in terms of his position in his background, to speak out in a way that provided support, and in a sense, protection to someone like my grandmother who lacked power and privilege in the society that she was. And it is thanks to people like von Galen, who were willing to speak out about human rights at the time that people like my grandmother were able to survive.

So now I think of my role as a member of Parliament being in many ways, like that position of von Galen. That is, being in a position of being able to speak out for justice, human rights, human dignity, and give voice to the desires, the aspirations of those who face injustice, and yet are not in a position to be able to speak for themselves. And I see many parallels between the human rights abuses of the past, some of the things that my grandmother experienced, and some of the human rights abuses that we see going on today. And when I think about the victims of modern day human rights abuses, I think about the promise we made to my grandmother's generation, a promise of never again. Never again will we allow the kind of horrific abuses that she and others experienced, to be repeated. And yet we have failed to deliver on that promise. So we need to step up, we need to work to do more to defend human rights in the present context, in response to the escalating horrific abuses of human rights that we see in certain countries around the world.

And today, I want to speak primarily about a particular piece of legislation that I brought to the House of Commons Bill S 204, from the last parliament in Canada. A bill that I brought in the spring of this year in a previous parliamentary session after it had received unanimous support in the Canada Senate. The goal was initially proposed in the KT and Senate by my excellent colleague, Senator Salma Tuljapur. Bill S 204 seeks to fight against organ harvesting and trafficking by reducing demand, and in the process, it would save lives. If this bill is passed, it would make it a criminal offence for a person to go abroad to procure an

organ taken without consent. It also creates provisions by which a person could be deemed inadmissible to Canada, if they are involved with forced organ harvesting and trafficking. And before Bill S 204 there was a similar bill we tried in a previous parliament -- Bill S 240. And before that, Bill C 350. This was a reintroduced version of a private member's bill that had been proposed in 2013, and then before that in 2008, by other MPs.

In every case, the mechanism has been the same that is to try to fight organ harvesting and trafficking by criminalizing the act of going abroad to receive an organ taken without consent. Prosecution for extraterritorial action is a little bit easier in this case than in some other cases, because transplant patients require follow up when they return to Canada or return to whatever their country of origin is. It is easier to identify cases where people have received an organ and be able to use that as a basis for asking further questions. So I've mentioned some of this legislative history in Canada fact as we've talked about forced organ harvesting in Canadian parliament for well over a decade.

And in the course of that time, Parliamentarians from every party have agreed that we have to do something about this. This isn't an urgent matter of human rights that we have to act to respond. We've tabled many petitions targeting forced organ harvesting. We've worked across party lines at every opportunity we've had. There's been calls for investigation to this horrific practice, strong statements have been issued to condemn the actions of the Chinese Communist Party and to call for the Canadian government to intervene and take active measures to stop the practice that is obviously so repugnant to a just and free society. This issue has been raised again and again in the House of Commons, in committees and by civil society.

And yet, we still have had trouble getting the consensus required to fast track the bill and thus run out of time, in every case. I'm hopeful that this Parliament will be the one to finally pass an organ harvesting and trafficking bill. As Albert Einstein said, "The world is a dangerous place to live not because of people who are evil but because of the people who don't do anything about it." Indeed, the world is becoming increasingly dangerous for vulnerable minority groups like Falun Gong practitioners, Tibetans, Uighur Muslims, Christians, and other prisoners of conscience in China. People who have committed no crime, and are being abducted from their families murdered by the state so that their organs can be sold and used for transplantation and for other purposes. Not only is forced organ harvesting in China, an inhuman practice that violates the universal dignity inherent to all human beings. It systematically perpetuates this unthinkable crime against peaceful religious believers, human rights advocates, and ethnic minorities.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes the inherent dignity of all human beings. Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of the person. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment. Everyone must have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of opinion and expression. This cannot be compromised or forgotten. It is when we forget that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that we now once again bear witness to act, that resemble barbarous, violent actions of the past that outraged the conscience of humanity. In particular, in my grandmother's time, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in response to the atrocities of the Second World War, when the international community, as I said, came together to say, never again, to make that commitment to each other and to make that promise to young people and subsequent generations.

We have an opportunity, in fact, a responsibility to intervene while we still can, to do what we can to make good on that promise. And that's why countries around the world have passed legislation and

resolutions to stand against the horrendous practice of forced organ harvesting. I want Canada to want other countries to join -- Italy, Taiwan, Israel and others who have led the way in enacting strong measures to end human trafficking and organ transplants-- to criminalise the act of their citizens going abroad to receive an organ taken without consent.

This practice violates the right to life, liberty and security of the person through subjecting prisoners of conscience who are denied the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, as well as the freedom of opinion and expression, to torture, and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and vote on Bill S 204. If passed, it will serve to protect the rights and try the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for people persecuted by the Chinese Communist Party through the horrific practice of organ harvesting. It is a practical piece of legislation with practical measures. This bill will disincentivize any Canadian who is in need of an organ to receive an organ that was forcibly taken without consent, by criminalizing that action. And it will empower law enforcement to actively pursue those perpetuating this injustice and hold accountable those complicit in these evil acts. It is crucial that we as people with the freedom to speak out and the capacity to respond to this most grievous violation of fundamental human rights do our part, combating and preventing these human rights abuses.

We as an international community, we have a responsibility to one another, to uphold the principles and values which we have committed to the principles and values which unite our human family. To stand by idly when innocent people are arbitrarily detained, tortured and killed for their organs on an industrial scale that reduces the human person as merely a means to an end and ignores their inherent worth and value. It fails to see and acknowledge the dignity and worth of the victims and their families in favor of the cruel slaughter being perpetrated by the Chinese Communist Party. U.S. President Harry Truman said at the signing of the United Nations Charter, we must build a new world, a far better one, one in which the eternal dignity of man is respected. 76 years later, we are still grappling with how we can uphold that basic fundamental human right of every person in this world including, and especially, the victims of forced organ harvesting. It is also important to discuss the Universal Declaration on combating and preventing forced organ harvesting.

It is a jointly launched initiative by stakeholders and NGOs from around the world. Chief among them Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting from the United States; CAP Freedom of Conscience from Europe; Transplant Tourism Research Association from Japan; Korea Association for Ethical Organ Transplants from South Korea, and Taiwan Association for International Care Organ Transplants from Taiwan. It was launched during these years that the United Nations General Assembly in September, during the event World Summit on combating and preventing forced organ harvesting. This declaration is an international roadmap to the steps that countries around the world, including Canada, could take to stand up and protect the fundamental rights of all victims of forced organ harvesting and trafficking.

The last S-204 will allow Canada to support this roadmap put in place by the Universal Declaration On Combating and Preventing Forced Organ Harvesting. It will allow us to do our part in the fight against violating basic human rights by providing for the criminalization of inhuman acts, and facilitating the criminal prosecution of forced organ harvesting at the national and international level. It would establish a criminal offence under Canadian law when committed into essentially the removal of human organs involuntarily from living or deceased donors where the removal is performed without the free informed and specific consent of the victims. This bill will allow candidates to take necessary legislative measures to ensure effective criminal investigation and prosecution of offenses that will take place in order to

combat and prevent forced organ harvesting. It would also bar entry to any person known to be directly or indirectly participating in forced organ harvesting. And I want to just end with a quote from Elie Wiesel another holocaust survivor and a human rights activist who said:

“We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant.”

So now is the time for us to take some time to do our part in combating and preventing the Chinese Communist Party's ongoing perpetration of this atrocious crime against its own population. Thank you.