



## INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY WEBINAR

December 10, 2021

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

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At the outset, I would like to thank DAFOH, Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting, and its dynamic Executive Director, Dr. Torsten Trey, for affording me the opportunity to present before this forum.

International Human Rights Day is celebrated every year on December 10th. And it is fitting for us to commemorate this day in asserting the equal dignity and rights of each human being in this world, and to take stock of where we are as a global people accountable to each other in brotherhood as My Brother's Keeper.

Lest we forget, this day of International Human Rights Day is observed every year as the day when the United Nations General Assembly on the 10th day of December in 1949, adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The grim atrocities of World War Two made human rights a priority.

This year 2021, is the 73rd anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Many governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations active in the human rights field scheduled special events to commemorate this day. It is thus befitting for DAFOH to facilitate this global symposium towards this just cause, in the urgent awareness of its primary objective, as enshrined in its name.

Lest we forget, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world. All states have reached a common understanding, each one having pledged to achieve the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, which is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge.

The declaration of 1948 with a broad range of political, civil, economic, social, and cultural rights is not a binding document; it inspired more than 60 human rights instruments, which together constitute an international standard of human rights.

As a founder and president of Harmony Foundation, which was set up in 2005 to establish social harmony between various communities, classes, and castes, and to strive to the essential dignity and human rights of all and without discrimination of religion, caste, creed, region or gender. I'm honored to be given this opportunity to speak at this important forum.

Our work at the Harmony Foundation is front and center in the fight for the rights and essential dignity of the least privileged amongst us, drawing inspiration on the life and legacy of a great patron, Mother Teresa, who we strive to keep alive in birth, deed, and recognition.

In her recognition, we also host the annual Mother Teresa Memorial awards, as a celebration of exceptional global work in the area of social justice. And while we engage activism in word and in deed, we hold to account the primary developing nations amongst us, including China, which hosts the largest population in the world, and also with a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. We believe that the more prominent amongst us must be held to greater scrutiny on the subject of human rights. It is therefore contingent upon China not only to act but also to be seen to act responsibly, while we address the issue of forced organ harvesting.

Only recently, the Harmony Foundation called out China for its dalliance with the Taliban, urging that the international community wake up from its convenient slumber and confront China regarding its blatant display of hypocrisy on the Taliban, and its stated cause of being anti-anarchist yet brutally terrorizing the Uyghurs and Hui Muslim minority communities closer to home for their religious practices.

We also highlighted the reports that over a million Uighur Muslims from Xinjiang province have disappeared into the oblivion of internment camps established by the Chinese government and together with Falun Gong practitioners are also suspected to be victims of elite state sponsored organized organ trafficking, according to media reports. The UN Committee Against Torture and the UN Special Rapporteur on torture have expressed concern over the allegations of organ harvesting from prisoners and have called on the government of the People's Republic of China to increase the accountability and transparency of its organ transplant system and punish those responsible for abuses.

The government of the People's Republic of China has failed to account adequately for the sources of organs when information has been requested by Manfred Novak, the former United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment. This allegedly and disturbingly makes China the only country in the world that systematically uses organs from prisoners for transplantation. Organ harvesting for trafficking, from condemned prisoners, violates all principles of medical ethics, besides propagating large scale abuse and severe human rights violations.

The stories in managing this diabolic enterprise agreement are often impossible to confirm. The work of organizations such as DAFOH is therefore commendable in exposing this malaise, even at the risk of personal safety. For the most part, organ trafficking occurs in hospitals, where there are corrupt medical practitioners. International organ trafficking is a big business.

The World Health Organization defines organ trafficking as commercial transplantation, where profit from transplantation is occurring outside of national medical systems. Most cases involve the poor, the destitute and the vulnerable, who are willing to part with an organ for money.

Transplant tourism flourishes in places with weak authorities where the destitute and economically weak become a store for organs for the wealthy and powerful.

Despite the gradual development of a voluntary organ donation system, information continues to emerge regarding serious human rights violations in procurement of organs for transplant, thus creating demand for trafficking in persons for the purpose of organs.

Persons trafficked for an organ removal is largely via deception, fraud, and a play of power and destitute conditions. Consequences are long lasting, and their health is jeopardized permanently.

This is an inhuman violation on so many levels, it should propel us to action and urgently so.

Illegal trade in human organs no doubt involves exploitation of the poor and is a gross violation of their fundamental human rights. The clause relating to compassionate donation in organ transplantation guidelines has been frequently exploited in an unethical manner, which is a violation of human rights.

Given that all states have yet to fulfil their obligation to recognize trafficking in persons for the removal of organs, which is also known as TPRO, as a human rights abuse, most of the victims are neither identified or recognized as trafficked persons, nor granted assistance, remedies or access to justice.

Organ trafficking can be referred to as one of the most cruel and grimacing crimes in the world. As such, it demands a human rights-based approach in analysis and response to this problem by placing the victim at the center of initiatives to combat this rise.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights should also be amended and adjusted to effectively address this great concern of organ harvesting and trafficking which is allegedly occurring in China on a very large scale.

Measures should also be put in place to effectively combat this vice, to stop and prevent it by heavily penalizing its practitioners to deter its continuation. Activists condemning organ harvesting and trafficking should rally behind renowned groups and organization like DAFOH, who are spearheading the campaign to lend gravitas to their cause of outlining the criminality of this trade.

December 10th, as International Human Rights Day, should be a platform for mobilizing support to stop forced organ harvesting and trafficking, constituting as it does a gross violation of human rights and continuation of slavery, which was outlawed in the 19th century.

An aggressive campaign should also be launched for China to be placed under sanctions and even ostracized from the international community until it outlaws and bans organ harvesting and trafficking within its borders and amongst its trading partners.

The open support given by the Chinese to the recent Taliban invasion of Afghanistan proves beyond doubt that China could go to any extent to gratify itself even to the extent of openly displaying its hypocrisy. How else would you justify China on the one hand arresting Muslims for growing their beards in China, while on the other hand, expressing great affection for and falling in love with the Taliban's beards.

More specifically, Falun Gong practitioners have been targeted in this heinous atrocity of organ trafficking, yet their suffering has been blind to the eyes of the world for over two decades. How can our world live with tolerating this organized atrocity and still state to uphold the rights and dignity of all humans and conscionable citizens of the world and represent mission of the United Nations?

I thus close by unequivocally urging the adoption of the new Universal Declaration on Combating and Preventing Forced Organ Harvesting, initiated by DAFOH, in order to fill the gaps that the 1948 document of the Universal Declaration has not been able to fill in stopping forced organ harvesting on a large scale from living people with a specific call for China's accountability.

Thank you.