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“The UN was not created to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell.” This is a quote from a former UN Secretary General in 1954, less than 10 years after the formation of the United Nations. To him, the UN's role was clear: peacekeeping, protecting, and preventing the atrocities in this world created at the hands of man and if you're attending this webinar today, I imagine you feel the same.

The United Nations is formed on the basis of peace, dignity and equality on a healthy planet. But today, with horrors beyond imagine and global crisis, we must accept that more needs to be done.

Today, the world sees the pain and suffering, torture and murders of hundreds and thousands of Falun Gong practitioners in China by the Chinese Communist Party in a web network of state organized organ harvesting. Today, we see the enforced disappearances of millions of human beings only because they chose to follow a spiritual practice of truthfulness, compassion and forbearance. Today, we see crimes against humanity on a scale unfathomable yet today, we still remain silent.

That is why I call on the United Nations to implement a three-step strategy to enhance transparency, accountability, and compliance with UN treaties, and to instigate investigations into the People's Republic of China to hold them accountable for crimes against humanity, torture, and breaches of international law.

In 2018, the China Tribunal published an interim judgment confirming that it was certain unanimously and beyond reasonable doubt that forced organ harvesting of prisoners of conscience had been taking place in China for many, many years and in 2019, the China tribunal found that China had committed crimes against humanity against the Falun Gong population beyond reasonable doubt. They are not the only ones to recognize this. Many more organizations, activists and NGOs have also found China to be committing deliberate and systematic acts causing human suffering and death on a large scale.

But despite these findings, and the abundant evidence and witness testimonies over the last two decades, little has been done by way of action. A contributing factor to this is the fact that crimes against humanity have not been codified in international law, and consequently, there is no real mechanism through which the UN can bring action for such atrocities. Although crimes against humanity have been recognized and prosecuted for almost 80 years, they are only codified within the Rome Statute, and can therefore only be prosecuted before the International Criminal Court. As China is not party to the

statute, it does not fall within the court's jurisdiction, and so cannot be used to seek redress for China's ongoing abuses. This means that there is currently no mechanism by which China or any country not party to the Rome Statute can be held to account and punished for crimes against humanity.

This leaves the obligation for mankind to address, prosecute, and prevent crimes against humanity, largely without legal basis. It seems implausible that a country in the 21st century could be found guilty of mass murder, enslavement, and extermination and then [there] not be a way to legally challenge this, but it is true. This is a long-standing potent gap in international law.

Former UN Special Rapporteur for torture expressed several years ago, that there is a need for a treaty that establishes state responsibility for crimes against humanity and former head of the UN Office for Legal Affairs stated that it is important to have a specific Convention, which will regulate all elements related to the interstate cooperation in fighting these crimes.

A search of the topic on the UN webpage further shows that there have been efforts to bring this treaty to light but it has yet to materialize. That is why today, I call on the UN to introduce a convention against crimes against humanity. This new treaty would provide a tool for the UN to prosecute these crimes in a similar way to genocide, war crimes, and torture, allow for the introduction of international obligations on member states to prevent the crimes occurring, and address a harmful omission in international law.

But that's not all. Falun Gong practitioners have faced tortures truly incomprehensible. They have been suspended from heights by handcuffs. They have been beaten with electric batons. They have been physically stretched with belts and force fed with rigid tubes losing teeth and suffering internal bleeding in the process. Some have faced force feeding with salted and boiling water. They have experienced pain and suffering that knows no bounds. Pain and suffering that makes the stomach turn and face grimace, to clutch your body and hope to never feel anything like it yourself. But it is a daily reality for these practitioners.

In 2020, the China Tribunal reviewed the evidence over the last 20 years and concluded beyond reasonable doubt that acts of torture have occurred in China against Falun Gong practitioners. Despite this, and despite China having ratified the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment in October 1988, the UN has yet to trigger application of the Convention on China for their ongoing forced organ harvesting. As part of this convention, it is mandatory that all party countries submit a report to the UN every four years, setting out what measures they have taken in the prevention of torture and the protection of victims.

In 2015, China's submitted their report to the board of experts, who consequently raised concerns about China's refusal to provide data on the number of prisoners in detention centers, their treatment of human rights lawyers, and the superficiality of their anti-torture measures. In a meeting with the Chinese delegate in November 2015, they refused to answer the questions of the committee, stating instead that the word torture was difficult to translate into Chinese. All the while, many more hundreds of thousands of people have lost their lives to this state sanctioned abuse. Article 20 of the Convention Against Torture states that if the committee receives reliable information, which appears to it to be well founded, that torture is being systematically practiced in the territory of a state party, the committee shall invite that state party to cooperate in the examination of the information and to this end to submit observations with regards to the information concerned.

The UN has repeatedly called on China for several years to cooperate and respond to the allegations. And each year they have refused. The China Tribunal opened the door to China to provide evidence to rebut the allegations of forced organ harvesting and they declined to do so. The world has called for answers, and China has remained silent. A UN special repertoire once said that torture is the moral abyss of mankind. It is the sacrifice of our humanity on the altar of our fears. It is the total capitulation not only of our personal integrity but it is the very end of civilization itself. Permitting China to continue torturing hundreds of thousands of Falun Gong practitioners on account of their failure to respond to cause of cooperation is nonsensical and rejects the very purpose of the UN and its intentions for a better world.

It is now time for the UN to take action and trigger an application of the Convention Against Torture to condemn and punish China for the physical and psychological torture they carry out on innocent victims every day for following a spiritual belief. Talking about torture doesn't help those who are being tortured. We must act and we must do it now. There is a duty to humankind for those who have the power to take action to do so. However, whilst international measures are necessary to achieve change, they are a futile effort without an accompanying mechanism by which to assess their success.

Previously, UN human rights experts have raised their concerns about forced organ harvesting in China and have called on China to promptly respond to allegations of organ harvesting, citing the lack of available data and information sharing systems as an obstacle for effective investigations and prosecutions. China has historically demonstrated an unwillingness to disclose data relating to organ transplants, and will provide only an estimated annual figure with no statistical evidence under the pretense that it is a state secret. Often the figures that they do provide demonstrate clear discrepancies.

For example, between 1977 and 2009, China recorded having carried out 120,000 transplants, but also recorded only 130 deceased organ donations in that same period.

Between 1999 and 2004. China's transplant rates increased by over 230% with no plausible explanation. Waiting times for a kidney transplant in China have dropped to a mere week, when in the UK, the average waiting time for a kidney transplant is three years.

That is why it is now necessary for the UN to introduce an annual transplant transparency statement, requiring each country to produce a statement to the UN disclosing the number of transplants carried out by each hospital in the country each year, specifying what organs have been transplanted. Additionally, the UN must initiate a requirement for all member states to disclose how many of their citizens have traveled internationally to receive an organ transplant, what organ they received and what country they had the procedure in.

The concept of UN treaties requiring data collection is certainly not new. In fact, the UN small arms treaty does just that. In order to improve gun safety and reduce gun crime, the treaty requires states to collect data on who owns a firearm, what type of firearm and what the licensing status is. China actually has a significant interest in this treaty and is currently one of its largest supporters and funders, having contributed almost \$140,000 in 2022 alone. There were also plenty of domestic laws enforced across Europe, Asia, and North America which required data collection as a fundamental catalyst for measurability of its effectiveness.

By introducing an annual statement requiring UN member states to disclose the number of transplants each hospital carries out per year, it will enhance transparency, ensure accountability, and protect the integrity of the UN and its ambitions in preventing human rights abuses.

When asked in 2014, to allow for independent investigations into the allegations of forced organ harvesting, the Chinese Communist Party replied, "it is not time yet." I plead you to recognize that that time is now. This matter is not theoretical discourse. It is a reality. It is happening and it is happening right now. China has been enabled to develop an illicit and lucrative international organ harvesting trade and much of the world has remained in disbelief. It has been the perfect cover up, a crime of such horrifying nature that humankind truly can't believe it's real. But it is and it needs to be stopped.

There remains to be a delusion of unanswered questions, but one thing remains clear. It is now time for the international community to recognize these crimes for what they are, crimes against all humanity, and to put measures into place to ensure that human rights are upheld universally across the globe.

Thank you.