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Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Manfred Nowak

-Excerpt: Organ Harvesting Allegation Transmitted by Special Rapporteur Manfred Nowak-

Organ harvesting. Organ harvesting has been inflicted on a large number of unwilling Falun Gong practitioners at a wide variety of locations, for the purpose making available organs for transplant operations. Vital organs including hearts, kidneys, livers and corneas were systematically harvested from Falun Gong practitioners at Sujiatan Hospital, Shenyang, Liaoning Province, beginning in 2001.

The practitioners were given injections to induce heart failure, and therefore were killed in the course of the organ harvesting operations or immediately thereafter. It is reported that employees of the following transplant centres have indicated that they have used organs from live Falun Gong practitioners for transplants: Zhongshan Hospital Organ Transplant Clinic in Shanghai, Qianfoshan City Liver Transplant Hospital in Shandong, Nanning City Minzu Hospital in Guangxi Autonomous Region, Jiaotong University Liver Transplant Centre in Shanghai, Zhengzhou Medical University Organ Transplant Centre in Henan, Oriental Organ Transplant Centre in Tianjin City, Tongji Hospital in Wuhan City in Hunan and General Hospital of Guangzhou Military Regional in Guangdong. It is reported that employees from the following detention facilities have indicated that organs from Falun Gong detainees have been used for transplants: Mijiang Detention Centre in Heilongjiang, First Detention Centre of Qinhuangdao City in Shandong Province and Second Detention Centre of Qinhuangdao City in Shandong Province.

After the organs were removed, the bodies were cremated, and no corpse is left to examine for identification as the source of an organ transplant. Once the organs were removed they were shipped to transplant centres to be used for transplants for both domestic and foreign patients. Officials from the following detention facilities have indicated that courts have been involved in administering the use of organs from Falun Gong detainees, namely: Qinhuangdao Intermediate People's Court in Shandong Province, First Criminal Bureau of the Jinzhou Intermediate People's Court and Kunming Higher People's Court.

It is reported that there are many more organ transplants than identifiable sources of organs, even taking into account figures for identifiable sources, namely: estimates of executed prisoners annually, of which a high percentage of organs are donated, according to the statement in 2005 of the Vice Minister of Health Mr Huang Jiefu; willing donor family members, who for cultural reasons, are often reluctant to donate their organs after death; and brain-dead donors. Moreover, the reportedly short waiting times that have been advertised for perfectly-matched organs would suggest the existence of a computerized matching system for transplants and a large bank of live prospective donors. It is alleged that the discrepancy between available organs and numbers from identifiable sources is explained by organs harvested from Falun Gong practitioners, and that the rise in transplants from 2000 coincides and correlates with the beginning of the persecution of these persons.

On organ transplants, in general, it has been reported that in March 2006, legislation was introduced which bans the sale of human organs and requires the donor to give written permission. The legislation also limits transplants to certain institutions, which must verify the source of the organs. This law came into force on 1 July 2006. Contrary to the Government assertion that human organs have been prohibited from sale, in accordance with the 1991 WHO guiding principles, it has been reported that up to this time Chinese law has allowed the buying and selling of organs; has not required that donors give written permission for their organs to be transplanted; there has been no restriction on the institutions which could engage in organ harvesting or transplants; there was no requirement that the institutions engaged in transplants had to verify that the organs being transplanted were from legal sources; and there was no obligation to have transplant ethics committees approve all transplants in advance. Moreover, evidence exists, for example, that at least up until April 2006 price lists for organ transplants in China were published on the Internet.