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Council of Europe

International Forum

A close look at environment and human rights in China

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3 pm – 4.15 pm
Room 7, 2nd floor

Allegations of organ harvesting in Chinese prisons

Human Rights Without Frontiers Int. calls upon the Council of Europe to open a debate on "organ harvesting" in Chinese prisons on the basis of the resolution 1481 on the "Need for international condemnation of crimes of totalitarian communist regimes"

Statement

Since the government of the People's Republic of China banned Falun Gong on July 20, 1999, this religious movement has been the focus of international attention. Numerous reports have highlighted and condemned the severe persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China.

Since the beginning of this year, there have been repeated allegations that the Chinese authorities are harvesting organs from Falun Gong prisoners.

Apart from Falun Gong sources, it must be noted that on March 24, 2006, *The Washington Times* published an article entitled "China harvesting inmates' organs". The American newspaper was saying a Chinese journalist had uncovered a secret detention center in northern China that is being used by a hospital to harvest human organs for sale to domestic and international buyers. On the prisoners' abuse, the journalist who fled China recently said that he first learned of the harvesting operation between October and December 2005 and that the prisoners used were members of the outlawed Falun Gong religious group.

On March 30, 2006, the *National Review Online* raised the issue with an article entitled "A place called Sujiatun. Are they killing Falun Gong for their organs?" Jay Nordlinger, the managing director, wrote that "organ-harvesting" in China was a very familiar story and that the PRC had been doing it with prisoners for many years. He recalled that in 2001, the U.S. Congress had held hearings on the matter.

Canada's former Secretary of State David Kilgour and human rights lawyer David Matas have launched an investigation into allegations that the Chinese communist regime is extracting and selling the organs of live Falun Gong practitioners and then killing the victims. At a press conference they held earlier this month with seven Members of Parliament from three major political parties they announced that they were planning to go to China to carry out a "completely independent investigation". Famous Hong Kong Human Rights Attorney and Member of Hong Kong Council Ho Chun-yan, expressed his support to the Canadian independent team.

On May 30, 2006, at a press briefing organized by *Human Rights Without Frontiers* and Irish MEP Simon Coveney, Mr Edward McMillan-Scott, Vice-President of the European Parliament, who had come back from a trip to China a few days before took the floor to say that the European Parliament should initiate an investigation into allegations of organ trafficking.

On June 4, 2006, Mr Edward McMillan-Scott wrote an open letter to the famous Chinese human rights advocate and dissident Gao Zhisheng in which he was saying:

"The condition of prisoners in China is increasingly well-known but it is only in recent months that a particular mistreatment - of Falun Gong practitioners - has come to light, namely the selection of prisoners for 'reverse-match' organ and tissue transplants, leading to their deaths. This is genocide, as defined in Article 2 of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide:

"any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such: Killing members of the group; Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;"

The practitioners I met in Beijing told me of their imprisonment and that of their wives, of the specially harsh treatment they suffered, including sleep deprivation, degrading and humiliating punishments and beatings of up to 20 hours at a time to elicit denunciations of Falun Gong. One said he knew 30 fellow practitioners who had been beaten to death. They were aware of organ harvesting: one had seen the cadaver of his friend and fellow practitioner after body parts had been removed."

On January 25, 2006, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe discussed the report of the Swedish MP Göran Lindblad on the "**Need for international condemnation of crimes of totalitarian communist regimes**" and adopted a strong resolution which says among other things:

"Totalitarian communist regimes are still active in some countries of the world and crimes continue to be committed. National interest perceptions should not

prevent countries from adequate criticism of current totalitarian communist regimes. The Assembly strongly condemns all those violations of human rights.

The debates and condemnations which have taken place so far at national level in some Council of Europe member states cannot give dispensation to the international community from taking a clear position on the crimes committed by the totalitarian communist regimes. It has a moral obligation to do so without any further delay.

The Council of Europe is well placed for such a debate at international level.”

Considering this resolution,

***Human Rights Without Frontiers Int.* calls upon the Council of Europe to open a debate about the allegations of organ harvesting practiced on prisoners in China, and in particular on Falun Gong practitioners, and to send a fact-finding mission to China.**