



China's former vice-minister for health, Huang Jiefu

Hong Kong University (HKU) recently awarded an honorary doctorate to China's former vice-minister for health, Huang Jiefu. Last year, the University of Sydney awarded Huang an honorary professorship.

Both universities have been forced to defend these awards, as Huang is one of the architects of China's organ transplant system which relies mainly on organs from executed prisoners, and 'prisoners of conscience' including Falun Gong practitioners, house Christians and Uyghurs.

The University of Hong Kong Students' Union issued a critical statement, pointing to Huang's admission that the Chinese regime had taken organs from prisoners sentenced to death. A spokesperson for the students' union said Huang told them he did not know where the organs came from, that he represented only the recipient, a position that did not seem to square with his own admissions of removing organs from executed prisoners.

In an interview with the Australia Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) last year, Huang admitted to personally extracting organs from executed prisoners.

He also told a 2004 National Conference on Organ Transplantation in Shenyang that one of the biggest obstacles to China's organ transplant system was the serious shortage of organ donors, according to state media.

Within two years the problem of donors was apparently resolved however, when state media quoted Huang, who said that most of the organs for transplants came from executed prisoners, reported the Los Angeles Times.

Trade in organs

Chinese officials only began identifying executed prisoners as the source of transplant organs

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after more troubling revelations began to reach public attention: that the primary source of organs was in fact executed prisoners of conscience. Prior to 2006, the Chinese regime flatly denied using organs from executed prisoners.

Evidence supporting this conclusion was advanced by two [Canadian researchers in 2006](#), in the form of hospitals advertising one-week waiting times, and doctors admitting in secretly recorded telephone conversations that executed Falun Gong practitioners were the source of organs.

University of Sydney professor of medicine Maria Fiatarone Singh says Chinese officials perfected the use of execution by lethal injection as a way to preserve organs of the prisoners.

"The person is anaesthetised, they don't die straight away, [that] gives the surgeons time to take out as many organs as they would like to, and then the lethal injection finalised," she said.

"Very different to killing someone as quickly and humanely as possible. It's done in such a way that actually allows this very, very unsavoury mix of execution and medical care and treatment to be done by the same team of doctors.

"It's horrific really."

China claims the prisoners willingly donate their organs, but the practice is condemned by the United Nations, the World Health Organisation and other international medical bodies.

Professor Fiatarone Singh says given they are incarcerated, prisoners "don't have the freedom to make that decision".

A prisoner's body can be worth as much as \$500,000, when it is broken down into parts like the liver, kidneys and eyes.

China leads the world in executions with as many as 4,000 a year, according to human rights groups.

Ethan Gutmann, a researcher of the transplant system, believes that organs were harvested from over 60,000 Falun Gong practitioners during the 2000s.

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Falun Gong practitioners are not criminals, they are imprisoned for their belief in "Truthfulness, Compassion and Tolerance", ideals that the communist regime finds challenging.

Living Falun Gong practitioners are still being killed for their organs in China today, while western governments ignore these crimes against humanity, for economic reasons.