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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Stichting Global Human Rights Defence, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[26 May 2025]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Forced Organ Harvesting as a Crime of Genocide Against Falun Gong Practitioners in China

Forced organ harvesting, referring to the coerced procurement of organs from living people without consent and killing the ‘donor’ through the process, has been a prevalent practice in China. This practice is enabled by the absence of the rule of law and the unchecked authority of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which dictates the prosecution of crimes and overrides constitutional and international norms.

Global Human Rights Defence (GHRD) expresses grave concern about the severe and targeted human rights abuses against Falun Gong practitioners in China, who have long been subjected to state-sanctioned forced organ harvesting. The ongoing human rights violations committed against the group, systematically concealed and denied by the CCP, exemplify an act of genocide, per the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. This statement outlines GHRD’s concern over the genocidal persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China and proposes recommendations to the Human Rights Council to mitigate these human rights violations at the earliest.

Falun Gong practitioners have been victims of state-sanctioned forced organ harvesting practices since 1999. The Chinese government’s persecution of Falun Gong practitioners through forced organ harvesting is not incidental but a calculated form of state persecution that aligns ideologically and politically with the CCP’s objectives, in particular the financial, ideological, and political benefits it gains through perpetuating the practice. Over the past two decades, the Chinese government has gained substantial profit from harvesting the organs of living Falun Gong practitioners and prisoners. These financial gains have incentivised the state and medical personnel within China’s transplant infrastructure to continue the practice. Moreover, the incompatibility of the core tenets of Falun Gong, rooted in a strong moral code, with the CCP’s communist ideals has motivated its systematic targeting, torture, and destruction of the Falun Gong community, underscoring its genocidal intent to destroy the group, both physically and spiritually.

The continuation of this criminal enterprise for over two decades reflects the ineptitude of the international community in effectively tackling this crime against humanity. The silence of world leaders and governments on China’s transplant crimes has further empowered the CCP to deepen its campaign of Falun Gong eradication without consequence. The inadequate intervention of the international community and world leaders has further emboldened China to extend its abuse to similar groups, including Tibetans, Uyghurs, and other Muslim groups in the country.

In July 2006, at the World Transplant Congress in Boston, DAFOH’s Executive Director, Torsten Trey, outlined that his conversations with Chinese doctors revealed that the Tianjin Hospital had conducted about 2,000 liver transplants in 2005 alone. This figure was inexplicable, considering China’s lack of a public organ donation system until the launch of the China Organ Transplant Response System (COTRS) in 2013. Subsequently, a Chinese doctor revealed these organs to be sourced from detained Falun Gong practitioners. After 1999, China’s transplant numbers surged rapidly, with the number of officially reported transplants exceeding 12,000 by 2004, a threefold increase.

The alarming availability of transplant organs at short notice for patients indicates the presence of a large, live organ bank and reveals the dire extent of organ harvesting in living Falun Gong practitioners. In 2020, several lung transplants on COVID patients were performed, with the wait times for the donor lungs unusually ranging from one to a few days. These developments are indicative of China’s exploitation of living Falun Gong practitioners, many of whom are prisoners, as a year-round, on-demand organ source, which explains its substantial increase in organ transplants.

The key principles underpinning the WHO Guiding Principles on Human Cell, Tissue, and Organ Transplantation are transparency and traceability. As organ transplants involve numerous parties, such as doctors, organ donors, and organ recipients, transparency between all parties is paramount in accounting for ethical considerations. However, the Chinese government has obscured transplant data by providing manipulated and fabricated numbers that mislead those trying to gain a transparent picture of transplant operations in China.

For instance, while the Chinese government publishes annual reports detailing the number of transplants, these numbers cannot be verified due to the lack of available data on the number of transplants at individual transplant centres across the country. Hence, the data provided by the government is open to manipulation and thus lacks transparency.

Survivor testimonies reinforce these findings. Falun Gong practitioners who escaped detention recounted being subjected to invasive medical tests, including blood and organ function checks, despite no medical necessity, and reported being threatened with organ harvesting if they refused to comply. Witnesses have also reported that some Falun Gong prisoners were coerced into signing a form to voluntarily donate their organs and suffer painless death or be subject to a torturous death.

As per an anonymous military veteran doctor, in a letter to the Epoch Times in 2006, there were more than 36 detention camps in China, holding up to 14,000 Falun Gong practitioners in one. As per eyewitness testimony, in these detention centres, written consent used for transplantations were counterfeits, often using the same handwriting; the eyewitness had seen about 60,000 such counterfeits. The adoption of such reprehensible strategies by authoritarian systems like the Chinese is indicative of the misleading and camouflaged nature of organ transplant programs in authoritarian regimes, compounded by the lack of oversight and the rule of law.

To protect itself against potential accusations of human rights violations, the Chinese government has adopted a strategy of deception to persuade other actors to believe factually false claims. In 2017, the President of China's Supreme Court said that the CCP's power transcended the Chinese constitution and stipulated laws. These internal revelations suggest that the CCP does not necessarily adhere to the Chinese constitution and thus openly disregards ethical considerations, with complete jurisdiction to dictate domestic institutions such as China's transplant industry to abide by its own norms. As such, the CCP also does not adhere to international ethical standards.

To further cover up its heinous human rights violations, the CCP has outright denied the execution of forced organ harvesting against Falun Gong practitioners with no supporting justifications. Such statements, along with the dissemination of disinformation, continue to mislead the Chinese public about the atrocities committed by the government and present a fictional narrative of the government's good intentions. By manipulating public opinion to conceal its human rights atrocities, the CCP is only further emboldened to consolidate power and violate internationally agreed-upon human rights norms.

Under Article II of the Genocide Convention, genocide includes acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group. These acts include killing members of the group and inflicting conditions calculated to bring about their physical destruction. China's persecution of Falun Gong fits this definition. From the public declaration of intent to eradicate Falun Gong by Jiang Zemin, the former head of the CCP, in 1999 to the ongoing, systematic killing through organ harvesting, the CCP's actions show a clear and deliberate attempt to exterminate a group it deems politically and ideologically incompatible with its rule.

Recommendations

In light of China's egregious human rights violations and its demonstrated acts of genocide, we urge the UN to enact binding legislation and take decisive action to punish the perpetrators of genocide in line with the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. China's invocation of national sovereignty to deflect condemnation must be unequivocally rejected, as genocide is not a purely domestic concern but a grave international crime that demands an urgent response in any civil and just world.

In accordance with the Genocide Convention, we assert that those responsible for orchestrating and executing this campaign of extermination against Falun Gong practitioners must be prosecuted without further delay to provide justice for victims. They should be brought before a competent state or international penal tribunal with jurisdiction over such crimes, as recognised by contracting parties.

Therefore, accountability mechanisms for violating human rights and international law should be strictly enforced. The continued absence of justice for Falun Gong victims will inadvertently perpetuate an incessant cycle of injustice and genocide if substantial steps are not taken by the international community against China. Responding with impunity will likely set a dangerous precedent for other states to believe that genocide can be pursued without consequence.

We call on the UN to urge governments and world leaders to sign the Universal Declaration on Combating and Preventing Forced Organ Harvesting, and to issue a formal condemnation of China's genocidal persecution of Falun Gong practitioners. Further, we also appeal to the international community to elevate global awareness of the atrocities committed by the CCP and extend meaningful support towards both Falun Gong victims and other minority communities, including but not limited to Uyghurs, Tibetans, Muslims, and Christians, who are subject to similar forms of systematic repression and organ harvesting, as part of the CCP's broader genocidal policies.
