

# Systematic Killings for Organs

Organs Forcibly Harvested from Falun Gong Prisoners of Conscience

**EACH YEAR, TENS OF THOUSANDS** of organ transplants are performed in China. But only a few hundred voluntary donations are on record. Where do all of the other kidneys, livers, hearts, and corneas come from? The Chinese government claims they are from executed prisoners, but refuses to provide details of who these people are, nor how their reported numbers fall far short of accounting for the full scale of available organs. Since 2006, mounting evidence indicates that vast numbers of organs have indeed been taken from prisoners killed on demand so that their body parts can be sold at lucrative prices for use in transplant operations. But the “donors” aren’t just death row criminals...

***They are prisoners of conscience and most of them are Falun Gong practitioners.***

The perpetrators of these crimes are officials of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), acting in collaboration with surgeons, prison authorities, and military officials. The victims are tens of thousands of innocent men and women held in detention centers, labor camps, and prisons simply for wishing to follow the spiritual path of their choice.

It remains unclear on what scale these crimes continue today. What is increasingly clear is how they haunt top CCP officials and offer insight into recent political events in China:

Why did Wang Lijun flee for his life to the U.S. Consulate in February? What are Bo Xilai’s most serious crimes? How is Neil Heywood connected?

With hundreds of thousands of Falun Gong and other prisoners of conscience still in custody, the international community must find answers to the disturbing questions raised by China’s transplant industry: Where do these organs come from? How are they available so fast?

## **Mounting Evidence**

The abuses first came to light in March 2006 when a woman claimed that Falun Gong practitioners had been killed for their organs at the hospital where she had worked and that her husband, a surgeon, had disclosed to her that he

removed corneas from the living bodies of 2,000 Falun Gong practitioners.

**“Overseas and domestic media and advocacy groups continued to report instances of organ harvesting, particularly from Falun Gong practitioners and Uighurs.”**

— U.S. State Department 2011  
Human Rights Report

Falun Gong supporters and human rights activists overseas immediately began looking into the allegations. Investigators pretending to be shopping for a liver or kidney called hospitals across China. To their horror, one doctor after another confirmed: We’ve got Falun Gong in stock; come in and we

can get you the organ within a week.

Two prominent Canadian lawyers, former Secretary of State for Asia Pacific David Kilgour and human rights lawyer David Matas, as well as American freelance journalist Ethan Gutmann, soon followed suit with their own inquiries. Both investigations concluded that somewhere in the range of 40,000 to 65,000 Falun Gong practitioners had been killed in this way from 2000-2006 (for details, see pg. 66 of [Compassion](#)).

Since then, additional witnesses have stepped forward offering chilling details on the evolution of this horrific practice, as Gutmann notes in a chapter of the recently published *State Organs*:

*“A surgeon has spoken – on the record and in great personal detail – of harvesting a living human being on an execution ground in 1995.... Simultaneously,*

## **How Does Organ Harvesting Work?**

Sometime around the year 2000, prison officials and doctors started colluding to give systematic medical testing to Falun Gong detainees—testing that suspiciously ignored injuries but checked the health of vital organs. Then, when a patient needed an organ, a suitable detainee would be matched, killed, and his or her organ taken and used for a transplant operation. In a macabre innovation to lessen the chance of organ rejection, their organs were extracted before they were formally declared dead. The body would be cremated to destroy evidence of their cause of death. One Chinese website boasted that it could provide matching organs in 1-4 weeks, a time frame medical experts say is impossible unless the Chinese hospitals had access to a huge stock of living organ “donors.”

*the investigation into the harvesting of Falun Gong practitioners, the bulk of the organ supply, has evolved beyond the initial witnesses... into increasingly solid confirmation. ... A respected Taiwanese surgeon confessed to me, with no small measure of shame and embarrassment, that his patients were regular recipients of Falun Gong organs on the mainland."*

## High-level Communist Party Involvement

In May 2012, a new set of phone transcripts was published, this time from calls made to senior CCP officials. The officials indirectly acknowledge not only that Falun Gong practitioners' organs have been harvested, but also that former Chongqing CCP head Bo Xilai and Chinese security czar Zhou Yongkang were involved in these abuses.

In perhaps the most direct such acknowledgement, a caller pretending to be an official investigating Bo's "disciplinary violations" speaks with Tang Junjie, a CCP security official in Liaoning Province, where Bo was governor from 2002-2004.

During the conversation, which took place in April 2012, the caller inquires: "What kind of directions or commands did Bo give regarding removing organs from Falun Gong practitioners?" To which Tang replies, "I was asked to take care of this task. Party Central is

## Recent Global Headlines: The Bo Xilai Connection

Disgraced Communist Party heavyweight Bo Xilai is widely known to have advanced his career by emphatically implementing the persecution campaign against Falun Gong while governor of Liaoning Province and then mayor of Chongqing. Wang Lijun, whose flight to the U.S. consulate sparked Bo's downfall, admitted during a 2006 award ceremony to having been present at large numbers of organ removal and transplant operations as chief of police in Liaoning's Jinzhou. He calls the act of transplanting organs from a still-living patient prior to their execution "soul stirring."

A series of recent reports from *The Epoch Times* newspaper indicate that Bo's wife, Gu Kailai may have murdered British businessman Neil Heywood because he knew too much about Bo and Gu's involvement in killing large numbers of Falun Gong prisoners of conscience to fuel a lucrative human body and organ trafficking business. With this information, the fact that Wang—who as police chief had himself overseen much torture and killing—would get so spooked by a foreigner's death that he would try to defect to the U.S. starts to make more sense. If Wang found out that Heywood, another close Bo associate involved in the same murky business as Wang, had been killed because he knew too much, then might Wang reasonably think he could be next?

actually taking care of this. ... He [Bo] was involved quite positively, yeah it seemed quite positive. At that time we mainly talked about it during the meetings within the [Liaoning CCP] Standing Committee."

## International Response

The revelations of top CCP involvement highlight how difficult it will be for people within that system to reasonably investigate these abuses. To date, the Chinese government has repeatedly stonewalled requests from the United Nations Committee Against Torture for credible information on the source of organs.

Yet, given how much international interaction China's transplant industry has—from doctors' trainings to accepting foreign patients to collaborative research—the impact of these abuses is not limited to China.

For this reason, is it critical that the media, diplomatic, and medical communities take action on their own to investigate and curb the environment that allows profit from these practices.

- Journalists in China can dig deeper into Wang Lijun's involvement in the organ transplant industry or into the Bo Xilai family's ties to firms involved in the trade of dead bodies in Dalian.
- The U.S. government should immediately make public any details Wang gave to the U.S. Consulate in Chengdu.
- National health carriers can stop sending patients to China, as Israel's did in early 2007.
- The medical community can follow recommendations made by prominent doctors and lawyers in a new edited volume titled *State Organs*.

For years, what is arguably one of the worst atrocities of our time has been ignored and pushed under the rug. It's time to give organ harvesting in China the attention it deserves.

## Doctors Decry China's Organ Trafficking in New Book

In July 2012, Dr. Torsten Trey and attorney David Matas published an edited volume on organ transplant abuse in China, including the killing of Falun Gong prisoners of conscience. The book, *State Organs*, is a collection of essays by leading medical professionals and other commentators from four continents who have researched organ harvesting in China. It consolidates evidence of these abuses, discusses their ethical implications, and provides insight on how to combat these violations.

**"The ultimate responsibility for the ethics of transplantation is the transplant team. They have to verify that consent was obtained... They can't say they don't know where the organ came from."**

- Arthur L. Caplan, PhD, head of the Division of Bioethics at New York University Langone Medical Center.

