

WASHINGTON, Sept. 23, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- In a country where human rights abuses are rampant, the plan for voluntary organ donations is vague and lacking transparency. China has announced its intention of "phasing out" harvesting organs from executed prisoners by 2015 and has introduced the China Organ Transplant Response System (COTRS), a computerized organ-allocation system.

Unfortunately, COTRS lacks transparency. Matching processes and donor information are not public information and not available to third parties. The announced deadline for "phasing out" organ harvesting from executed prisoners is vague. Chinese officials speak of 2015 but also admit that the practice might continue indefinitely. Some Chinese officials only speak of ending the "reliance" on prisoners' organs but remain unspecific on the date of complete cessation.

In 2007, the Chinese Medical Association pledged to the World Medical Association to end organ harvesting from executed prisoners. Now, six years later, the pledge remains unfulfilled and has even reversed course, as China refers only to "phasing out," not ending the practice.

The international community considers the harvesting of organs from prisoners unethical. It is unacceptable to only gradually "phase out" this crime against humanity. The introduced computerized organ-allocation system is insufficient as it does not guarantee that the organs entered into the computer system are ethically procured. Resolving the forced organ harvesting from prisoners in China does not require a computerized organ-allocation system. Instead, what is required is an immediate cessation of the present unethical practice and the introduction of a system that provides traceable documentation of subsequent organ procurements.

Aside from convicted prisoners sentenced to death, prisoners of conscience - primarily practitioners of Falun Gong - are subject to forced organ harvesting. Without publicly admitting the use of prisoners of conscience as organ source, there is no guarantee that this path of organ procurement will end. The computerized organ-allocation system could be misused as a

mechanism for "organ laundering," mixing illegally harvested organs with voluntarily donated organs. The premature commendation of this dangerously deceptive computerized organ-allocation system brings to mind the disturbingly favorable impressions of the International Red Cross after the 1944 visits in Theresienstadt and Auschwitz.

In 2006, China Daily reported the number of transplants in China to be about 20,000, with 90 percent of the organs coming from executed prisoners. Pressure and attention from the international community in the past few years has contributed to recent developments and this indicates that the international community needs to continue efforts to call for an end of the organ harvesting abuse. [Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting states](#)

that calling for an immediate end of the killing for organs is the only correct response to prevent a secret continuation of the forced organ harvesting. From the perpetrator's perspective "phasing out" the current practice might be the preferred choice, however from the victim's side it is gruesome and horrific every day it continues.

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