

For Immediate Release: Vatican Should Not Give Blessing to China's Organ Harvesting Whitewash

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China's participation in an organ trafficking summit hosted by the Vatican science group comes despite no evidence that past practices of forced organ harvesting have ended; alleged reforms in China remain unverified due to lack of transparency.

ROME, February, 3, 2017 — The Vatican's Pontifical Academy of Sciences (PAS) should reject the Chinese government's claim that its decades-long policy of forcibly harvesting organs from prisoners of conscience has come to an end, a leading physicians' human rights group said Thursday.

Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting (DAFOH) says that the planned PAS summit in Rome next week on the vital question of the illicit trade in human organs should not go forward without taking steps to hold the government of China accountable for its claims that the country's well-documented program of forced organ harvesting has ended. The implementation of the alleged reforms in China remains vague and unverified due to lack of independent, free inspections.

Huang Jiefu, head of China's state organ transplant program, will be participating in the summit, casting doubt on the meeting's ability to, in the words of Pope Francis, "eradicate this new form of slavery."

"Without transparency, verification of alleged reforms is impossible. Accountability for past transplant abuse must not be ignored. Without accountability, there is no reason to trust the government of China's claim that forced organ harvesting of prisoners has come to an end. Hundreds of thousands of Falun Gong practitioners have been blood tested and killed for organs in China. Yet, instead of investigating these urgent concerns, China's alleged reforms are taken at face value without independent scrutiny", says Dr. Torsten Trey, Executive Director of Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting.

DAFOH is calling on those participating in the summit, including the World Health Organization and The Transplantation Society, to demand the following of Dr. Huang and the Chinese government:

- **Confirm that any forcible organ harvesting from prisoners of conscience, including members of Falun Gong and any other prisoner group, has ended and will not resume.**
- **Provide evidence that China's forced organ harvesting practices, authorized by provisions from 1984, has come to an end by publicly proving the abolishment of the 1984 provisions and make public new legislation that explicitly prohibits organ harvesting from all prisoners.**
- **Provide the annual organ transplant numbers for each of the 20 licensed transplantation hospitals in Beijing.**

The goals of the PAS summit are laudable, and should be at the forefront of every group seeking to promote human dignity throughout the world. But if China is allowed back into the community of nations without providing evidence that it has truly abandoned its cruel and illegal practice of forcibly harvesting organs, most notably from Falun Gong practitioners, Christians and other prisoners of conscience, the noble goals of the summit will be severely compromised.

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