

Alberta Doctors' Digest

Guest Editorial: Illegal organ harvesting must stop

My first introduction to the Uighur (sometimes spelled "Uyghur") crisis was in the fall of 2018, while coming out of the TELUS Centre of Arts and Learning in Toronto. A Chinese couple was standing to speak to me after my talk. They said to me: "You're doing so much for Rohingya, but what about us?" I replied truthfully that I had too much on my plate. But this was before media attention really started to focus on this tragic issue. So I wasn't as informed about it, but my curiosity was piqued so started reading up on it.

I was pained and shocked what I found out. You know how you hear some stories that seem so outlandishly evil or cruel, like something from an Orwell novel, that you just dismiss it off the top of your head. That's what the accounts of this genocide seemed like.

Organ harvesting is something we imagine occurring in a dystopia or perhaps by cartels on the bottom fringes of society. But now, there is enough evidence to conclusively state that China is, in fact, harvesting the organs of political prisoners and ethnic detainees, all guilty of "thought crimes." The wait times for organ transplants in China are the lowest in the developed world, and now it's evident why. One or two accounts you can dismiss, but this one had a mountain of testimony and records all saying the exact same thing.

There are about 15 to 16 million Uighurs living in the autonomous region for centuries. In 2017, the Chinese government started to take Uighurs to the concentration camps or, so-called vocational training camps. I've been told by members of the Uighur community as well as multiple authentic resources who say that when husbands are in concentration camps, Han Chinese (government operatives) men are sleeping with their wives in the same bed. Their children have been separated and kept in state run orphanages. According to UN reports, there are between one and three million Uighurs in concentration camps in China as part of the government's efforts to eliminate any ethnic and religious differences. There was a drone video released recently of hundreds of blindfolded men and women being led to trains in rows neat enough to make Himmler jealous.

It's hard not to overemphasize this. The most systematic campaign of ethnic cleansing and cultural erasure since 1945 is currently occurring in Western China. The Communist Party is determined to stamp out any minority that seems too different than the model of the perfect, obedient, atheist, Han Chinese citizen. It started with the Falun Gong, a people who practiced a form of spirituality too different from Confucianism for the government's liking. Now it's happening to the Muslim Uighurs and will likely soon spread to Tibetans and Christian groups.

I met a Uighur lady named Arzu Gul a few months back who, like many other in diaspora, is unable to sleep at night thinking about what's happening to her family. She has had no contact with them since 2017. One of her remote relatives sent her a

WeChat picture. Her family members were in her parent's room, all smiling woodenly at the camera and whoever was behind it. Arzu cried when she told me that as a child she never saw her mother's uncovered head. But in this picture, she was not wearing her headscarf. Her father had lost so much weight he was nearly unrecognizable. They were not allowed to talk on the phone with her.

By far, the most horrific part of this is the cold efficiency. My younger son is in high school where they are learning about the Holocaust. He told me that what he found most interesting, in a morbid way, was how efficient the Nazis were. Before they killed their victims, they made sure to take anything of value. Their hair was used to make socks for Kriegsmarine sailors, their shoes were used by other German citizens, and even the fillings in their teeth went to the Nazi treasury. They really believed in the mantra of "waste not, want not." I fully believe that if the Third Reich had lasted up until now and had today's advances in medicine, they would be behaving the exact same way with organ harvesting as the Chinese Communist Party is doing now.

We know now that organ harvesting has been going on in China for the last decade, at least, with Fallon Gong practitioners, Tibetans and Uighurs. Multiple intelligence agencies have confirmed that many in these concentration camps are having their organs harvested for use in China and surrounding areas, sold to Chinese citizens or to foreign visitors looking for transplants. "Waste not want not."

It's hard for us to do anything about China's stranglehold on the global economy, but as doctors in a western democracy, we can help put a stop to this barbaric practice. I urge everyone here to support the following measures to help ensure Alberta doctors are doing everything in our power to stamp out illegal organ harvesting and profiteering from genocide:

- We should not support any person or institution knowingly engaging in research, clinical or education collaborations involving any transplant doctors who participate in organ trafficking or the procurement of organs for transplantation from vulnerable or coerced persons or groups including prisoners and ethnic or religious minorities.
- We should push the Canadian government to outlaw organ transplants from nations with dubious track records.
- We should push the Canadian government to give us the freedom, as doctors, to report patients we believe have violated those laws.

There are doctors in China who have torn up their Hippocratic oaths to facilitate organ transplantation. Let's do our part to make up for their sins.

Recommended reading:

[China is harvesting thousands of human organs from its Uighur Muslim minority, UN human-rights body hears](#)

Editor's note: The views, perspectives and opinions in this article are solely the author's and do not necessarily represent those of the AMA.

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