**Joint Hearing on Organ Trafficking Reveals Horrors Worldwide**

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WASHINGTON, June 23 -- Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J. (4th CD), issued the following news release:

New evidence that the Chinese government, hospitals and officials continue to profit from the billion-dollar illicit organ harvesting industry was revealed today by medical experts at a hearing jointly chaired by Representative Chris Smith (NJ-04), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Human Rights, and Dana Rohrabacher (CA-48), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats.

"The illegal practice of organ harvesting is barbaric, but it is growing as a commercial and punitive practice. We need a concerted global response to this problem," said Smith. "The conflict in Syria has created a black market from human organs and ISIS has sanctioned the harvesting and sale of organs taken from Christian prisoners. We also have horrific evidence of Eritrean victims in Sinai, whose organs are brutally removed and sold when families are unable to pay the traffickers a ransom. The biggest problem by far is China and the government sanctioned harvesting of organs from executed prisoners--including prisoners of conscience." (Link to Smith testimony (http://chrissmith.house.gov/UploadedFiles/2016-6-23\_International\_Organ\_Harvesting.pdf))

Witnesses included a medical expert from Harvard Medical School and researchers on the harvesting of organs from prisoners of conscience in China. The Chinese government has made public promises to stop the practice of harvesting organs from prisoners and reform its organ transplant system, however Falun Gong religious adherents report of non-consensual organ removals by the Chinese government.

"The fact that the evidence we have now examined shows much larger volumes of transplants than the Government of China has asserted points to a larger discrepancy between transplant volumes and Government of China-identified sources than we had previously thought existed," said David Matas, Senior Legal Counsel for B'nai Brith Canada. "That increased discrepancy leads us to conclude that there has been a far larger slaughter of practitioners of Falun Gong for their organs than we had originally estimated." (Link to Matas testimony (http://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA16/20160623/105116/HHRG-114-FA16-Wstate-MatasD-20160623.pdf))

"Profits drive hospital production. But what drives the (Chinese Communist) Party? I don't pretend to have special insight into that black box other than the Marxist practice of covering up a crime against humanity by liquidating anyone who is familiar with the crime," said journalist Ethan Gutmann. "Perhaps that explains why 500 Falun Gong are examined in a single day, or given blood tests in their homes, or why Uyghur neighborhoods are riddled with forced disappearances." (Link to Gutmann testimony (http://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA16/20160623/105116/HHRG-114-FA16-Wstate-GutmannE-20160623.pdf))

"I have visited more than 70 countries in this world with a goal of combating organ trafficking. In one such visit to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the physician sitting next to me at dinner told me of this incident: the mother of a 14-year-old girl who underwent a kidney transplant in Tianjin, China, and return home to Saudi Arabia ill. This patient underwent a biopsy of a kidney transplant to discover the kidney was obsolescent, scarred, certainly not suitable for transplantation," said Dr. Francis L. Delmonico, Professor of Surgery at Harvard Medical School. "It had been obtained from an executed prisoner. This patient subsequently developed a viral infection that should've been prophylactically treated at the time of the transplant in China. This 14-year-old girl died within weeks of her transplant because of that derelict care." (Link to Delmonico testimony (http://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA16/20160623/105116/HHRG-114-FA16-Wstate-DelmonicoF-20160623.pdf))

"In the event of brain dead organ recovery, the warm ischemic time is very minimal, because the heart stops only moments before the organs are cooled," said Dr. Charles Lee, spokesperson for the Global Service Center for Quitting the Chinese Communist Party. "With "brain death" not practicable, and almost no explainable, legitimate cause of death, then why did almost all organ procurements have such short warm ischemia times, with many of them even being under a minute? The most plausible explanation is that most of these donors have been arranged to die when the organ procurement needs to happen. We know that these were not voluntary donors, and we know that the operation was scheduled in advance, because the recipient was already ready for the organ (given the short cold ischemic times.) This required blood-matching. Thus, the donors must have been killed for the purpose of having their organs removed. This is mass murder." (Link to Lee testimony (http://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA16/20160623/105116/HHRG-114-FA16-Wstate-LeeC-20160623.pdf)

"The Chinese government has been trafficking in organs for profit for far too long and we have strong evidence that Falun Gong practitioners were singled out for organ harvesting," said Smith. "We cannot accept more excuses. We don't want more false promises. We need concerted effort to stop this barbaric practice. Organ harvesting should be condemned by the world community by the world community any complicit Chinese officials or doctor should be held accountable."

The House passed HR 3694, the Strategy to Oppose Predatory Organ Trafficking Act, two weeks ago. That bill amended the Trafficking Victims Protection Action of 2000 and required more diplomatic action to stop organ trafficking and required reporting on the issue by the State Department. Smith is the author of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

This is the fourth hearing Rep. Smith has held looking at the issue of organ harvesting in China.

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