

# Death-row inmates main source of organs in China: report

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Executed prisoners were still the main source of organs used in transplant operations in China due to the lack of voluntary donations, a top health official was quoted saying Wednesday.

China has long vowed to reduce its reliance on death-row inmates for organs, but high demand and a chronic shortage of donations meant they remained a key source, the Legal Daily quoted Vice [Health Minister](#) Huang Jiefu as saying.

Huang reportedly made the remarks on the sidelines of the country's annual parliamentary session in Beijing where about 3,000 delegates from across the country have gathered for 10 days of meetings.

China banned the trade in [human organs](#) in 2007 and two years later began rolling out a nationwide donation system, but demand for [organ transplants](#) still far exceeds supply in the country of 1.3 billion people.

About 10,000 transplants are carried out annually, but an estimated 1.3 million people are waiting for transplants, state media said previously, opening the door to the illegal sale of organs and forced donations.

The Chinese Medical Association, an official body representing doctors, said in 2007 that China would no longer transplant organs from executed prisoners except for their immediate relatives, earlier reports said.

In 2009 Huang said the rights of death-row inmates were respected and

written consent from prisoners was required before their organs could be harvested, the [China Daily](#) said at the time.

But Huang admitted that executed prisoners were "definitely not a proper source for organ transplants".

International [human rights groups](#) have long accused China of harvesting organs from executed prisoners for transplant without the consent of the prisoner or their family -- charges the government has denied.

Amnesty International China researcher Sarah Schafer said Huang's latest comments suggested "nothing much has changed".

"We feel that this lack of progress is quite chilling," Schafer told AFP. "There's no way a prisoner facing execution can give meaningful consent."

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