

Lawyers take Chinese organ-harvesting claims to Australia

November 21 2016, by Rod McGuirk



Canadian lawyers David Matas, left, and David Kilgour pose for a photograph at Australia's Parliament House in Canberra, Australia Monday, Nov. 21, 2016. The pair came to Australia's Parliament House on Monday to persuade lawmakers to pass a motion urging China to immediately end the practice of what they say is organ harvesting from prisoners of conscience. (AP Photo/Rod McGuirk)

Two Canadian lawyers came to Australia's Parliament House on Monday to urge lawmakers to pass a motion calling on China to immediately end the practice of what they say is organ harvesting from prisoners of conscience.

David Kilgour, a former prosecutor and Canadian secretary of state for Asia-Pacific, and David Matas, a [human rights](#) lawyer, say they have evidence that China performs an estimated 60,000 to 100,000 transplants a year.

They argue that killing Falun Gong practitioners, Muslim Uighurs, Tibetan Buddhists and Christians was the only "plausible explanation" for sourcing of the organs—without offering proof of such practices. China has a black market of ordinary people selling their organs, through brokers, for use in transplants.

Such claims have been around for years but have not been independently verified, in part because China's opaque legal system makes such inquiries virtually impossible. It's also not a cause that's advocated by most international [human rights](#) groups. China says it has reformed its system to eliminate the harvesting of organs from executed prisoners, although doubts remain about how completely that ban has been enforced.

China says it performed 10,057 [organ transplants](#) last year and has not harvested organs of executed prisoners since January 2015.



Canadian lawyer David Kilgour addresses Falun Gong practitioners demonstrating outside Australia's Parliament House in Canberra, Australia Monday, Nov. 21, 2016, against forced organ harvesting in China. Kilgour, a former prosecutor and Canadian Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific, and David Matas, a human rights lawyer, have published evidence they say shows that China performs an estimated 60,000 to 100,000 transplants a year, with organs primarily taken from Falun Gong practitioners, Muslim Uighurs, Tibetan Buddhists and Christians. (AP Photo/Rod McGuirk)

The Chinese Embassy in Australia did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Monday.

The U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution in June calling on the State Department to report annually to Congress on the implementation of an existing law barring visas to Chinese and other

nationals engaged in coercive organ transplantation. The resolution also condemns persecution of Falun Gong, a spiritual group China calls a cult and has outlawed.

China accused Congress of making "groundless accusations."

The European Parliament passed a similar declaration in July calling for an independent investigation of "persistent, credible reports on systematic, state-sanctioned organ harvesting from non-consenting prisoners of conscience" in China.

Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade First Assistant Secretary Graham Fletcher told a Senate committee last month that he had doubts about the credibility of Falun Gong reports of forced organ harvesting.



Falun Gong practitioners demonstrate outside Australia's Parliament House in Canberra, Australia, against forced organ harvesting in China on Monday, Nov. 21, 2016, as two Canadians addressed a meeting of lawmakers from several political parties inside. David Kilgour, a former prosecutor and Canadian Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific, and David Matas, a human rights lawyer, have published evidence they say shows that China performs an estimated 60,000 to 100,000 transplants a year, with organs primarily taken from Falun Gong practitioners, Muslim Uighurs, Tibetan Buddhists and Christians. (AP Photo/Rod McGuir)

"They are not given credence by serious human rights activists," Fletcher said.

He said Chinese were not being executed for being Falun Gong followers or Christians.

The Australian Health Department said at least 53 Australians traveled to China for [organ transplants](#) between 2001 and 2014.

Around 200 Falun Gong practitioners demonstrated outside Parliament House against forced organ harvesting on Monday as Matas and Kilgour addressed a meeting of lawmakers from several political parties.

Government lawmaker Craig Kelly said he was considering moving a motion condemning forced organ harvesting which could be put to the House of Representatives early next year. A draft urges China to immediately end the practice.

© 2016 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: Lawyers take Chinese organ-harvesting claims to Australia (2016, November 21) retrieved 27 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-11-lawyers-chinese-organ-harvesting-australia.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.