

Forum: Human Rights Council II

Issue: Eradicating the illicit trade in human organs.

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Introduction

Humans trade organs to those in need of transplant. It is generally believed that there is a shortage of organs. However, in most of the countries, it is often the laws that ban the sale of organs as it prohibits the value of the donations made. People in the Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) need the money to survive even though the receiver will offer even if it is far less than the common price or the poor may even sell their organs that are 'spare' such as kidneys for additional money. While waiting lists for organs in richer countries elongate, people living in a country of extreme poverty has a greater temptation to sell their organs. One of the most common transplants performed are kidneys, which are performed 65,700 annually, have approximately 10% of the living donors are in poverty. However, there are no reliable data on organ trafficking, as wealthy patients charge between \$100,000 and \$200,000 while poorer patients charge approximately \$1000. Transplants have become a growing problem because as 'transplant tourism,' rich patients preferring to travel abroad in order to buy kidneys from poor donors, is increasing drastically.

Definition of Key Terms

Organ Trafficking

This is the process of illegally acquiring an organ in which the "donor" is given a quantity of money as a payment.

Transplant Tourism

Transplant Tourism is desperate patients willing to travel long distances to insecurely obtain transplants they need. Outlaw surgeons are also willing to ignore regulations or medical norms and pay a small amount of money to the 'donors.' In these cases, the donors are mostly very poor or suffering from poverty.

General Overview

Organ Trafficking in both LEDCs and MEDC

In both of these types of countries, there are specific types of people who cause the augmentation of organ trafficking. In MEDCs, more people want a transplant and are desperate, therefore use organ trafficking to satisfy their needs. However, in LEDCs, they have more people who need money desperately. Therefore, their choice is to sell their organ because the theory for a kidney is that human is able to survive with only one.

Situation of LEDCs

People in LEDCs are most likely to be the people who donate or sell their organ. They are tighter in money, therefore they would want to sell it for the amount of money they need. However, since they have not seen large amounts of money, a kidney that would normally cost \$100,000 will be only paid as \$1,000 and still be considered as a lot.

Situation of MEDCs

Most people in MEDCs are the patients who need the organs. However, they are aware that legally having an organ transplant will take a long time. Therefore, if the patients are desperate, they are willing to be a transplant tourist. They are willing to go anywhere to receive an organ and they are more likely to go to a LEDC. Those patients will give a small amount of money in order to get the necessary organ.

Consequences of Trafficking

Health Consequences

Due to deficiency of information available about health and medical complications, nutrition and **lack of access to adequate health care has worsened**. In addition, there is a lack of resources for medical check-ups after a surgical operation for transplant has taken place. Plus, it is more likely for people to make fun of or discriminate people who had transplant as a result of poverty, therefore psychological issues will follow.

Social Consequences

In some rural villages, male selling kidneys are seen as 'male prostitution.' This is because the villagers believe that one's body is created naturally, but selling it would mean crime and moral degeneration. If the person is not married, the prospects for marriage will be reduced. However, if the person is married, there will be discrimination towards the children of

organ sellers, and excommunication from communities. In other words, that family would be excluded from the rest.

Economic Consequences

Mostly in LEDCs, when a person sells their organs, due to discrimination, unemployment will be more likely to be present. This may be because of the physical inability to return to work after surgical operation which might lead to loss of income. Moreover, often organ sellers do not receive full payment right after selling, however further on which may cause economic problems for the poorer people.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

World Health Organization (WHO)

World Health Organization (WHO) works towards global safety and qualify recommended principles of the regulation of organs and tissues. It also provides encouragement for countries that have problems with trafficking organs.

Organs Watch

Organs Watch is a documentation center which brings together human rights activists, social medicine specialists and anthropologists to organ transplantation to focus on the human rights of organ related trafficking.

Initiative on Global Organ Trafficking (IGOT)

Initiative on Global Organ Trafficking (IGOT) provides information and materials about organ trafficking, intending to combat the illegal organ trade. IGOT conducts research into transplant trafficking and aims to raise awareness of this issue.

World Health Assembly

The World Health Assembly urges governments to take measures to protect the poorest and most vulnerable groups from transplant tourism as the problem becomes international.

China

In China, citizens have been violated and executed for not very serious activities such as bribing, credit card theft and stealing truckloads or vegetables. However, Chinese embassy has been trafficking organs from the executed prisoners.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
March, 2001	Despite ban in organ trafficking, they are still sold in India
2001	China selling organs from prisoners
June, 2001	China's families illegally sell their executed relative's body to organ traders.
April, 2002	In South Africa, a person was forced to kill their own baby because of money shortage
May, 2003	Italy Rushes in law to ban 'spare part' of a baby

Relevant Resolutions

- Prevention, Combating and Punishing trafficking in human organs, 20 December 2004 **(59/156)**
- Human organ and tissue transplantation, 22 May 2004 **(Committee A, third report)**

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