

Aus-British ‘China Tribunal’ revives organ harvesting smear

A self-appointed UK-based “China Tribunal”, with no legal authority or official imprimatur, on 17 June handed down its “final judgement” that the Chinese government has systematically mass-murdered Falun Gong practitioners and other “prisoners of conscience” to harvest their bodily organs. Read beyond the summary, and one soon discovers that the so-called judgement is founded not upon hard evidence, but hearsay coupled with a brazen substitution of assumption for facts.

The Tribunal purports to have conducted its work in such a way as “to avoid prejudice or pre-judgement falling on the People’s Republic of China [PRC]”—including the ridiculous claim that it evaluated its evidence while imagining that “the country concerned was not the PRC but some imaginary country with a good human rights record”, thus pre-judging China as an abuser. And the Tribunal’s inherent bias becomes even more obvious when one considers that it exists only because the “International Coalition to End Transplant Abuse in China” (ETAC), an Australian-based non-governmental organisation with links to the anti-PRC Falun Gong Movement (FGM), was miffed that numerous governments (including Australia’s), along with international medical organisations including the Red Cross, refused to endorse its allegations. “Had any official national or international body pronounced authoritatively on criminality of the organ transplant practices in the PRC”, the judgement’s authors complain, “then there would have been no reason for ETAC to commission the Tribunal.”

The Tribunal cites a small number of what it says are eyewitness and survivor testimonies of torture, and the extraction of organs from the bodies of executed death-row prisoners. (Chinese authorities acknowledge the latter was once standard practice, but say it was phased out beginning in 2010, and ceased in 2015). All, however, seem to be connected to the FGM, which has a history of fabricating such claims. As a 2006 US Congressional Research Service report released by WikiLeaks revealed, in March that year “US Falun Gong representatives claimed that thousands of practitioners had been sent to 36 concentration camps throughout the PRC. According to their allegations, at one such site ... a hospital has been used as a detention centre for 6,000 Falun Gong prisoners, three-fourths of whom are said to have been killed and had their organs harvested for profit. American [embassy] officials ... visited the area as well as inspected the hospital on two occasions and ‘found no evidence that the site is being used for any function other than as a normal public hospital’.”

The Tribunal attempts to validate similar claims on a much larger scale purely via statistical projection founded on the presumption of guilt. According to its weird circular logic, the Chinese government is simply asserted to be transplanting organs on an industrial scale, and therefore it must be murdering people for said organs, else it could not perform so many transplants. The Tribunal reports a 2013 claim by the head of China’s organ transplantation program, that he performed “over 500 liver transplants” in 2012; and another from the director of the Organ Transplant Institute of Peking University—a top research facility in the field—that the institute’s hospital had “conducted 4,000 liver and kidney transplants within a particular year”. It then cites a 2019 statistical “analysis” which extrapolates similarly high rates of activity across not only all of China’s 146 designated transplant hospitals, but also “a significant number of unapproved hospitals taking the total to well over 700”, to arrive at an estimate of 69,300 transplants a year, and possibly up to 100,000. And never mind that the Red Cross agrees with China Organ Transplant Response System (COTRS) administrators that such numbers are ridiculous: British Royal Statistical Society President Sir David Spiegelhalter “re-ran the data analysis, and his results conformed exactly” to the original claim; thus, the Tribunal asserts that it is “reasonable to assume that some or all of the data provided by both COTRS and the Red Cross has been falsified”. Hardly—the fact that a statistician’s extrapolation based on the same assumptions yielded the same result is proof of maths, not murder.

Hatchet man

The foregoing is underpinned in turn by the assumption that China must be evil, because it is an “authoritarian” socialist state and not a “Western” liberal “democracy”. It is therefore unsurprising that the Tribunal’s chairman and the lead author of its “judgement”, Sir Geoffrey Nice, QC, is a senior British establishment operative who has made a career of peddling false charges against Anglo-American geopolitical targets. As deputy prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, Nice initiated its 2001 prosecution of deposed Serbian/Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic for war crimes and genocide in the 1990s Balkans wars. Milosevic, who died in custody of a heart attack in 2006, was eventually exonerated. “Buried in a footnote deep in the fourth volume of the judgment against Bosnian-Serb General Ratko Mladic”, analyst Andy Wilcoxson reported in 2017 for the Strategic Culture Foundation, “the judges unanimously conclude that ‘The evidence received by the trial chamber did not show that Slobodan Milosevic ... participated in the realisation of the common criminal objective’ to establish an ethnically homogenous Bosnian-Serb entity through the commission of crimes alleged in the indictment. ... We were told that he was the ‘Butcher of the Balkans’ but there was never any evidence to support those accusations. We were lied to in order to justify economic sanctions and NATO military aggression against the people of Serbia.”

More recently, Nice was co-author of the infamous “Caesar Report”, which supposedly catalogued, via

images supplied by a Syrian Military Police photographer who had defected to a Qatar-backed "opposition" group, the torture and murder of over 11,000 detainees by the Syrian government in March 2011-August 2013. But even pro-regime-change NGO Human Rights Watch admitted in 2015 that almost half of the pictures showed dead Syrian soldiers and other victims of war-time violence. As American investigative journalist Rick Sterling reported 4 March 2016 for Counterpunch: "There is strong evidence some died in conflict. Others died in the hospital. Others died and their bodies were decomposing before they were picked up. ... The accusations by 'Caesar' ... that these are all victims of 'death in detention' or 'death by torture' or death in 'government custody' are almost certainly false."

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