

HUMAN DIGNITY INTERNATIONALLY
Notes for Talk to The India Canada Friendship Circle (ICFC)
Hon. David Kilgour,
Rockcliffe Community Centre, Ottawa
September 29, 2019, 3-5pm

Thank you, president Roohi Ahmed, for the opportunity to kick off your fall series. Our paths crossed at the Independence Day Celebrations for India on August 15th both this year and last. Years earlier, we were colleagues at what is now Global Affairs. It is good to know that she has kept in touch with the vast India file in her private capacity and is the current President of the India Canada Friendship Circle (ICFC) in Ottawa.

This talk will focus briefly on human indignity situations in three countries essentially from the standpoint of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and universal values. Before doing so, a word about the Musikhinas, Dr. Elena and Mikhail, refugees in Canada from Russia. Elena and her daughter Olesia are with us today.

The Minister of Immigration should cease the deportation of the Musikhinas immediately. They have been given a two-year stay, but they clearly qualify for humanitarian and compassionate admission.

Briefly,

- Dr. Musikhina did academic research on Lake Baikal in Siberia and uncovered information about pollution resulting from military and other activity. She became an activist, speaking out about both environmental issues and against

the seizure of Crimea and incursions into eastern Ukraine by Putin.

- When it became clear in 2015 in a number of ways, including the shooting of their dog and “accidental” deaths of close academic colleagues, that her life was in danger, she and husband Mikhail fled Russia to join their daughter, Olesia and her daughter in Gatineau, later seeking asylum.
- Benedict Rogers, the co-author of the UK report on Russia, “Poison, Torture, Lies and Repression: Human Rights in Russia Today”, released last week in London, spoke about the risks political dissidents face today in Russia. Elena Musikhina is certainly one of them. CSIS has met with the Musikhinas out of concern for their safety even within Canada.
- Mikhail Musikhina is working for a building scaffold firm in Quebec and a number of his colleagues have signed a letter of support for allowing them to stay in Canada. Elena is learning French.

In short, Minister Hussen, Minister Goodale and the prime minister should act now to do ‘the Canadian thing’ here. I say that as someone who years ago represented the Immigration Dept at refugee hearings in Ottawa, seeking to have some persons removed from Canada. The Musikhinas are genuine refugees.

CHINA

Over two decades, the Beijing party-state has been organ-harvesting from prisoners of conscience—primarily the large (70m) Falun Gong community, an exercise and meditation group across China since 2001, but also others, including Tibetans, Christians and Muslim Uyghurs.

In mid-2006, the Coalition to Investigate the Persecution of Falun Gong in China (CIPFG) asked David Matas and me as

independent volunteers to investigate persistent claims of organ pillaging/trafficking from Falun Gong. We released two reports and a book, *Bloody Harvest*, and have continued to investigate. We concluded that for 41,500 transplants done in the years 2000-2005 in China, the sourcing beyond any reasonable doubt was predominately Falun Gong prisoners of conscience.

Our main conclusion was that there “continues today to be large-scale organ seizures from unwilling Falun Gong practitioners (...) Their vital organs, including kidneys, livers, corneas and hearts, were seized involuntarily for sale at high prices, sometimes to foreigners, who normally face long waits for voluntary donations of such organs in their home countries”.

Here are two among 18 kinds of evidence that led to our conclusion:

1. Investigators made many calls to hospitals, detention centres and other facilities across China claiming to be relatives of patients needing transplants and asking if they had organs of Falun Gong for sale. We obtained on tape and then transcribed and translated admissions that a number of facilities were trafficking in Falun Gong organs.
2. Falun Gong prisoners, who later got out of China, indicated that they were systematically blood-tested and organ-examined while in forced-labour camps across the country. This could not have been for their health since they were regularly tortured, but it was necessary for successful organ transplants and for building a bank of live “donors”.

Nobel Peace Prize nominee and co-founder of the International Coalition to end Organ Abuse in China (ETAC), Ethan Gutmann - author of *The Slaughter* (2014) - places the persecution of the

Falun Gong, Tibetan, Uyghur, and house Christian communities in context. He explains how he arrived at his “best estimate” that organs of 65,000 Falun Gong and “two to four thousand” Uyghurs, Tibetans and house Christians were “harvested” in the 2000- 2008 period.

Matas, Gutmann and I released an Update on our two books in June 2016 in Washington, Ottawa and Brussels (accessible from the ETAC website at www.endorganpillaging.org).

- It provided a thorough examination of the transplant programs of hundreds of hospitals across China, drawing on medical journals, hospital websites, and deleted websites found in archives. It analyzed hospital revenues, bed counts and utilization rates, surgical personnel, training programs, state funding and other factors.
- We concluded cautiously that a minimum of 60,000 transplants per year were being done across China as of mid-2016, not the approximately 10,000 its government claimed.

Belgium, Italy, Israel, Norway, Spain, Taiwan and other nations now ban transplant tourism by their nationals, but the international community has yet to take a strong stand.

ETAC announced in 2018 that an independent people's Tribunal to inquire into organ harvesting from prisoners of conscience in China had been established to determine what criminal offences, if any, had been committed by forced organ harvesting. The tribunal took evidence from over 50 fact witnesses, medical experts, human rights investigators and others.

This June, the Tribunal Chair, Sir Geoffrey Nice QC, who was a prosecutor at the international criminal tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, said in a unanimous determination after its hearings that it was “certain that Falun Gong was ... probably the principal

source - of organs for forced organ harvesting”. He added: “There is no evidence of the practice having been stopped and The tribunal is satisfied that it is continuing.”

In its final judgment, the Tribunal stated, “The conclusion shows that very many people have died indescribably hideous deaths for no reason, that more may suffer in similar ways and that we all live on a planet where extreme wickedness may be found in the power of those, for the time being, running a country with one of the oldest civilizations known to modern man.”

The China Tribunal’s summary and full reports/recommendations may be found at its website: chinatribunal.com

Permit me to invite all of you to join our International Coalition to End Transplant Abuse in China (ETAC), which you can do at www.endorganpillaging.org.

TURKEY

The second persecuted community consists of persons termed Gülenists, in and from Turkey.

Turkish President Erdoğan asserts in an unproven allegation that the failed 2016 coup emanated from the followers of Fethullah Gülen, a moderate Turkish Islamic preacher living in exile in the U.S. Erdoğan urges Washington to extradite Gülen to Turkey.

Once friends and political allies as democrats, Erdoğan and Gülen fell out in 2013 in a conflict partly involving alleged corruption. It’s become a bitter international conflict, with Erdoğan classifying the Gülenists as the “Fethullah Terrorist Organisation” (FETÖ) and vowing to cleanse Turkey of the “terrorist parallel state”. In the post-coup crackdown, more than 100,000 alleged Gülenists were detained. Thousands fled abroad.

The Gülen Movement is based on ethical values/advocacy for universal access to education, civil society, tolerance and peace. It embraces democracy, moderate Islamism, and interfaith/ ~~and~~ intercultural dialogue. These attributes appeal to many of us internationally who value democracy, rule of law, freedom of speech, and tolerance of diversity.

The movement is active in education, with private schools and universities in ~180 countries. Erdoğan insists that they are a part of a vast, secretive network to infiltrate state institutions. In reality, the schools share common values -- character-building, ethics, tolerance and discipline -- and are committed to academic excellence.

Erdoğan is now trying to replace the Gülen schools with Maarif Foundation schools. Gülen teachers/ administrators from foreign countries have been kidnapped/incarcerated, with or without the consent of host countries.

Turkey's Justice and Development Party (AKP) government has spent millions originally earmarked for secular public education to promote its political Islamist ideology abroad and spread the "Erdoğan brand," which, the Stockholm Center for Freedom (SCF) says, is "extremist, rigid, bigoted, divisive and hostile."

In February 2018, as a participant in the Gülen Movement's activities in Ottawa and a human rights advocate following the unfolding tragedy in Turkey, I was their guest, along with a bi-partisan delegation of U.S. state legislators, on a trip to visit Gülen schools/universities in the nations of Georgia, Macedonia, Kosovo and Albania.

In Tbilisi, Georgia, we witnessed a bail hearing for X, an administrator, teacher and Turkish citizen who'd been imprisoned for 9 months. He was granted bail, but the court had yet to decide

on the extradition issue despite his 15 years of teaching in Georgia. The Public Defender of Georgia correctly indicated that removing him to Turkey “contradict(ed) the norms of international law and national legislation.”

Whenever the Maarif Foundation seizes a Gülen school, it employs new teachers/principals with privileges under Turkish passport law. By January 30, 2019, the foundation had reportedly taken over 250 schools in 40 countries, totaling ~30,000 students.

Fortunately, in the democratic countries in Europe, the U.S. and Australia, Turkey’s efforts to quash Gülen schools have encountered stiff resistance.

In sharing this information with you about the Gülenists, I hope that you’ll support their effort as moderate Muslims to keep their schools open and to build a world of tolerance and inter-cultural/inter-religious dialogue and harmony.

As Fethullah Gülen says: “...We should be freed from fear of the other and enjoy diversity within democracy...(D)ialogue and education are the most effective means to surpass our differences.”

IRAN

The third persecuted group consists of members in and from Iran of the People’s Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI). I’m working with them as the volunteer co-chair of the Canadian Friends of a Democratic Iran NGO.

66 years ago, a movement to establish democratic national governance was derailed when a U.S.-backed coup toppled the elected Mosaddeq government in a dispute over an oil company nationalization. The ensuing absolute monarchy of Shah Pahlavi,

became increasingly autocratic, until it was overthrown in a 1979 revolution which was later subverted by Grand Ayatollah Khomeini and his oppressive governance model.

The PMOI broke from Khomeini, organizing a peaceful street demonstration in 1981, which was fired upon by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

Losses in the 1980s Iran-Iraq war caused human losses on both sides, including many Iranian child soldiers.

By 1986, several thousand PMOI refugees who had been expelled from France, reportedly as part of a deal whereby Khomeini released French nationals from Lebanon, relocated to a desert in Iraq, where they built Camp Ashraf.

Khomeini's religious decree against political opponents in mid-1988 resulted in the massacre of approximately 30,000 - mostly PMOI political prisoners.

After Khomeini's death in 1989, more collective clerical rule projected terror and intervened elsewhere.

A U.S.-led coalition invaded Iraq in 2003, seizing Ashraf weapons, but agreeing to protect the residents. Washington later violated this commitment by transferring protection to the Iraqi government, which attacked unarmed Ashraf residents from 2009 - 2013 with devastating results.

After the PMOI survivors moved to Albania in 2016, their international support grew considerably. At the recent opening of Ashraf 3, political and civil society leaders from about 50 nations attended, including Canada and the U.S. The PMOI is the key member of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI). President Maryam Rajavi's platform aligns with the democratic world's principles and core values.

Meanwhile, the Tehran regime has worked at extracting concessions from the West - a strategy bolstered by IRGC assistance to extremist proxies, including Hezbollah, Houthis, Hashd-al-Shabi, and Hamas. Tehran is partly responsible for Syria's millions of refugees and deaths of civilians. It has also waged a vicious crackdown against human rights lawyers, recently upholding a 30-year prison sentence with 111 lashes against Amirsalar Davoudi, a defender of several political activists.

Scotland's Struan Stevenson, Coordinator of the Campaign for Iran Change, observes, "For four decades, the Iranian people have put up with rampant corruption, (and) unchecked abuse of human rights... Iranians are angry, frustrated and demanding regime change."

The tide appears to be turning . There are widespread protests, especially among the young, who comprise about 70 per cent of the ~83 million population .The economy has crumbled to a GDP per capita of about (US) \$7,000 partly from years of rampant corruption, bad policies, and Washington's adoption of a 'maximum pressure' strategy. There's been an increase in Tehran's policy of creating regional crises, such as seizing commercial ships in international waters, and the recent attacks on Saudi Arabia's oil facilities.

A number of political leaders now agree that the NCRI is a capable alternative to the oppressive Regime of Terror in Iran. They say, "We know there's a group of people (who've fought) for freedom all their lives, (who've) lost (family members) in the (struggle) who are dedicated to (freedom)"

Conclusion

Because the organ pillaging of Falun Gong practitioners in China continues, companies in democracies should re-think doing business with China.

Whether the Maarif Foundation will shut down all Gülen schools remains to be seen, but democracies must not cave in to Turkey's bullying.

A regime change in Iran is unknown, but PMOI President Maryam Rajavi is ready to call for free and fair elections, gender equality, separation of church/state, the rule of law, regional peace and a nuclear weapon-free Iran.

And - hopefully the Musikhinas will become permanent residents of Canada.

Thank you.