

Taiwan Indicts Surgeon Who Sent Patients to China for Organ Transplants

The case marks the first indictment against illegal organ brokers since the island amended its Human Organ Transplant Act in 2015.

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Doctors prepare for a kidney transplant in a file photo. Pierre-Philippe Marcou/AFP/Getty Images



TAIPEI, Taiwan—A Taiwanese surgeon and four other individuals have been charged with illegally brokering organ transplantation in China, a case that a local medical advocacy group said is alarming given that Beijing sources organs from prisoners of conscience.

The surgeon, Chen Yao-li, is accused of orchestrating a criminal group that helped send 10 Taiwanese patients to China for organ transplant surgery from 2016 to 2019, the district prosecutors' office in southern Taiwan's Changhua County said in a press release on Nov. 25.

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Chen is charged with violating the island's Human Organ Transplant



Act, which says that any transplant organ "shall be provided or acquired free of charge" and "persons who broker organ transplants



in the provision and acquisition of organs" may be jailed for up to five years and a maximum fine of NT\$1.5 million (about \$46,200).



Chen once worked at the Changhua Christian Hospital's organ transplant center.

After prosecutors announced the indictment, the hospital said Chen has not worked at the facility since July 2022. The Changhua prosecutors began investigating Chen in March of that year.

The hospital warned locals against traveling to China for liver transplants, citing reports and the United Nations' warning about the regime's forced organ harvesting that targets Falun Gong practitioners, prisoners of conscience, Uyghurs, and Christians. It added that it prohibits unethical and illegal medical conduct and respects the results of judicial investigations.

David Huang, vice chairman and spokesperson of the Taiwan Association for International Care of Organ Transplant, said the case marks an important milestone.

It is the first indictment against illegal organ brokers since Taiwan amended its Human Organ Transplant Act in 2015, to prohibit the use

of organs from executed prisoners, as well as the sale, purchase, and brokering of organs.

“I hope that this indictment will attract the attention of local citizens and the government. Going to China for organ transplantation involves medical, moral, and legal risks,” Huang said in an email to The Epoch Times.

The Epoch Times has requested comment from Chung Shan Medical University Hospital, where Chen works as the vice director of its liver transplant center.

Liver and Kidney Transplants

Prosecutors alleged that Chen, while working at the transplant center, had his transplant patients contact an accomplice surnamed Huang, who was the head of an unnamed biotech company. Huang allegedly arranged for six Taiwanese patients to have either a liver or kidney transplant surgery at a Chinese hospital in Qingdao, a city in eastern China’s Shandong Province.

Huang allegedly charged each of the six patients NT\$5 million to NT\$7.5 million (about \$154,000 to \$231,000) for a liver transplant, and NT\$3 million to NT\$3.5 million (about \$92,400 to \$107,800) for a kidney transplant. Huang’s wife, surnamed Yang, then connected patients with doctors at the Affiliated Hospital of Qingdao University to arrange the surgeries.

Chen allegedly also went to the Chinese hospital in Qingdao to “provide instruction” inside the operating room while the liver surgeries were taking place, according to prosecutors.

Separately, Chen allegedly instructed a Taiwanese nurse assistant surnamed Hsieh to travel to China to administer post-operative care for a payment of NT\$200,000 (about \$6,150) per patient.

Chen also worked with an accomplice surnamed Lin, who had for years provided “organ transplant services” between Taiwan and China, to have four Taiwanese patients undergo either kidney or liver transplant surgery in Changsha, a city in central China’s Hunan Province. The two then split the payments.

Prosecutors are seeking a six-year sentence for Chen and a three-year sentence for each of his four accomplices. They aim to confiscate the group’s total illegal earnings of about NT\$20.4 million (about \$628,000).

Chen allegedly earned over NT\$14.8 million (about \$455,600) during the three-year span. He returned \$83,060 during the investigation, and prosecutors have confiscated his property to prevent him from “enjoying the illegal proceeds,” the Changhua prosecutor’s office said.

Hsieh must now return NT\$1.1 million (about \$33,800) in illegal earnings as part of her settlement with prosecutors, who agreed to a deferred prosecution against the nurse.

Organ Transplants in China ‘Highly Risky’: Prosecutors

Taiwanese prosecutors warned people of the risks that come with undergoing organ transplants in China.

Most of the patients involved only survived for two or three years after the organ transplants, they said. Some died within a week after returning to Taiwan.

“It demonstrates that organ transplant surgeries that involve intermediaries and are untransparent are highly risky,” the press release stated.

The London-based China Tribunal in 2019 concluded that forced organ harvesting was happening on a “significant scale” in China, with Falun Gong practitioners being the main source of organs. Practitioners of Falun Gong, a spiritual practice also known as Falun

Dafa, have been targets of persecution by the Chinese regime since 1999.

The U.S. House of Representatives passed the Falun Gong Protection Act (H.R. 4132) in June.

If enacted, the legislation would require the president to provide relevant congressional committees with a list of foreign individuals who have “knowingly and directly engaged in or facilitated the involuntary harvesting of organs within the People’s Republic of China.” Those on the list would face sanctions such as a ban on entering the United States.

Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla) **introduced** the Senate version (S.4914) of the legislation in July. Rubio has been **nominated** by President-elect Donald Trump to serve as U.S. Secretary of State.

David Huang from the Taiwan Association for International Care of Organ Transplant applauded the legislative efforts in the United States. Should the Senate pass the legislation, Huang said it would be “an epoch moment in the making.”

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