



Summit on Organ Trafficking and Transplant Tourism



Summit 7-8 February 2017

Introduction

The issue of organ trafficking has been a concern of the World Health Organization (WHO) for three decades, expressed initially in 1987, but reaffirmed by the adoption of a World Health Assembly Resolution (WHA63.22) on 21 May 2010. In that Resolution, the WHO Member States indicated their determination that the growing *“utility of human cell, tissue and organ transplantation for a wide range of conditions in low-resource as well as high resource countries”* be firmly grounded in the *“principles of human dignity and solidarity which condemn the buying of human body parts for transplantation and the exploitation of the poorest and most vulnerable populations and the human trafficking that result from such practices.”* Organ trafficking violates the principles of justice, equity and respect for human dignity as it entails not only the sale of organs, but also because it has become a form of slavery that exploits bonded laborers, migrants and refugees fleeing the genocide in their countries, executed prisoners, minors – the destitute and the excluded.

Aware of this tragedy, Pope Francis made the eradication of this new form of slavery one of the main goals of his Pontificate. The following information was presented to Pope Francis regarding organ trafficking in September, 2014:

Organ trafficking and transplant tourism are driven by the shortage of organs for transplantation-- only 10% (120,000) of the WHO estimated need of 1 million organ transplants are performed each year.

Organ trafficking is continuing worldwide in Asia, Mexico and other Latin American Countries, Egypt, Pakistan, India, with recipients coming from Canada and US, Western European countries, Australia, and the Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and The Emirates. Iran is known for its government sponsored sale of human organs.

The objectives of the 2017 Pontifical Academy Summit on Organ Trafficking and Transplant Tourism are to describe the widespread extent of transplant tourism and organ trafficking (testimony given by attendees from countries with transplant services currently throughout the world); prepare a Statement referable to the Pontifical Academy Summit that would be signed by the participants and distributed worldwide; engage a group of stakeholders (Government Officials, Prosecutors, Investigators, Justices, and Journalists) who can be influential in the long term in combatting organ trafficking in an alliance with transplant professionals; develop an alliance of individuals committed to combating organ trafficking and transplant tourism – and engaging health authorities to achieve a prohibition of organ trafficking as a form of human slavery – by the representatives participating in the Pontifical Academy Summit.

We hope this Summit will create a top-down and bottom-up movement in society, to raise awareness of the extension and seriousness of this modern challenge and lay the groundwork for moral and appropriate solutions based on human dignity, freedom, justice and peace.