

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada

NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

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Speaker: Ms. Vani Selvarajah

Oral Statement to the 25th Session of the UN Human Rights Council Regular Session - Oral Statement Item 6: UPR Outcomes: China

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada (LRWC), non-governmental organization in special consultative status

Thank you Mr President,

Lawyers Rights Watch Canada requests Council to consider our remarks on China's UPR.

Council should be gravely concerned about the case of democracy activist, Cao Shunli, who peacefully campaigned for civil society input into China's UPR process. In September, 2013, she was scheduled to fly to Geneva to attend civil society meetings in preparation for China's October 22nd UPR. She was arrested at Beijing Airport and "disappeared" until October 21st, when she was charged with "picking quarrels and provoking troubles."¹ She was seriously ill in prison but was refused medical treatment. On February 20th, Cao Shunli was transferred to a Beijing hospital.² She died on March 14th³ while on life support.

In the fall of 2013, Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting delivered a 1.5-million-signature petition to the High Commissioner for Human Rights seeking an end to and an investigation of China's "slaughter of prisoners of conscience for organ procurement."⁴ In December, the European Parliament condemned and demanded an immediate end to China's state-sanctioned organ harvesting from executed prisoners of conscience, mainly Falun Gong practitioners.⁵

China prohibits lawyers from defending such practitioners, and Courts from accepting lawsuits on their behalf. Lawyers advocating for Falun Gong practitioners, including Gao Zhisheng,⁶ are intimidated, disbarred, imprisoned, and/or tortured.

The Outcome Report provides no meaningful response to documentation of China's attacks on human rights lawyers.⁷ In the face of systemic torture, killing for organ procurement, deprivation of independent legal representation and harassment of human rights defenders and lawyers, LRWC considers States' comments "welcoming" China's human rights progress as cruelly inappropriate. Thank you Mr. President.

1 Amnesty International, "Chinese human rights defender arrested: Cao Shunli," 31 October 2013, available <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA17/040/2013/en/4dd15931-b939-44c0-87ed-e48185897419/asa170402013en.html>

2 Sophie Richardson "China wrongs a rights defender": *Wall Street Journal*, 2 March 2014, <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702303801304579414212169703026>

3 Canada Saddened by Reported Death of Chinese Human Rights Activist, Government of Canada, 15 March 2014, <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-eng.do?nid=825329>

4 Petition to UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Calling for an Immediate End of Forced Organ Harvesting From Falun Gong Practitioners in China, DAFAH, <http://www.dafah.org/petition-to-the-united-nations/>

5 European Parliament resolution on organ harvesting in China (2013/2981(RSP)), available at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=MOTION&reference=P7-RC-2013-0562&language=EN> *ibid*.

6 Repeated enforced disappearances, harassment, disbarment, torture, illegal prosecutions and imprisonment of Gao Zhisheng for his human rights activities have been extensively documented. See Lawyers For Lawyers, and Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada, Joint UPR Submission -- People's Republic Of China, March 2013, available at <http://www.lrwc.org/2013-china-upr/>

7 Lawyers for Lawyers, and Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada, Submissions to the Universal Periodic Review of China," March 6, 2013, <http://www.lrwc.org/ws/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Joint-submission-UPR-China-L4L-LRWC.pdf>.