Intersecting Human Rights Crises: Organ Transplantation and Organ Trafficking

The organ trafficking market is on the rise, fuelled by growing demand as well as unscrupulous traffickers. While waiting lists for organs become longer in rich countries, selling one’s organ in a country of excruciating poverty is an irresistible temptation. The better quality of organs harvested from live people makes it a sweeter deal for wealthy and potential buyers. The increasing demand for organs has greatly intensified organ trafficking around the world and the challenges of transplantation are pushing ethical concerns about trafficking and its victims, including women and children, to the top of the international agenda. There is no reliable data on organ trafficking - or indeed transplantation activity in general - with brokers reportedly charging between $100,000 and $200,000 to organize an organ transplant for wealthy patients. Frequently, impoverished and ill-educated donors may receive, as little as $1000 for a kidney.

Our speakers will explore the ethical issues of organ trafficking with a focus on shortage of organs for transplantation, lack of organ donors, ‘black-market’ organ trafficking, some problems with organ transplantation such as possible immune rejection and keeping organs alive outside the body, among others.

The panel will feature keynote addresses by one of today’s leading bioethicists, medical doctors, experts in gender issues at the United Nations and the Council of Europe as well as the director of New York Organ Donor Network.

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