

25-Sep-09

According to the Chief Rabbinate of Israel...surprisingly yes. A somewhat shockingly unanimous decision was made 2 days ago by the religious government body that brainstem death constitutes death according to Jewish law. This would make it halachically permissible to remove an organ from a braindead person before the heart has stopped beating, making organ transplant possible. Their ruling did not have to do directly with organ transplant, but it definitely sets the stage for it. Together with modern organizations such as [HODS](#), the Halachic Organ Donor Society, we may see Israel soon, and Jews in general more willing to donate organs to those in need.

The bill approved by the Rabbinate, recently passed by the Knesset, has even more far-reaching consequences. For one, it would allow disconnecting a braindead person from life support even if his heart is still beating. It would also allow a woman whose husband has suffered braindeath to remarry.

This reverses a 30 year old decision that halachic death only occurs at clinical death, leading to many legal complications with regard to all of these issues. Though the decision was never implemented for technical reasons, the shift is still dramatic.

The only influential Rabbi disagreeing with this decision is **Yosef Elyashiv**, long known as a staunch conservative and leader of the Lithuanian sects of Ultra Orthodoxy. He holds that no organs may ever be removed under any circumstances. But he was overruled.

As of today, less than half of the families of braindead patients agree to donate their organs, 35% for religious reasons, and the rest for personal reasons. Altogether, almost 58% refuse to donate organs. That figure could begin to lighten now.

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## [China, Organ Harvesting, Sweden, Iran Sanctions, and Israel](#)

24-Sep-09

Sounds like a lot to cover in one post, but believe it or not, these topics are all related. Here's how.



**China**, a huge, repressive, polluting, morally repugnant regime is known to have many an “organ harvesting prison” in its territory. They arrest political opponents, and they tell them they can go free if they simply give up a kidney and half of their liver. Oh, it won't kill them, and yes, they get to go free, but on the other hand, if they don't give up an organ, they stay in prison. Call it **organ extortion**, **organ harvesting**, call it repugnant, which I did already.

Let's talk about China and Israel. Recently, China hosted the Olympic games in Beijing. Israel participated, over several calls to boycott by few, but vocal politicians. And now, a year later, Israel – not China – is being accused of organ harvesting, by Swedish newspapers. OK. There have been those who have written of a possible “divine” connection in this, articles you may find floating around the internet here and there, or call it Karma, or whatever you want. Whatever you may want to say, it is definitely poetically ironic that the nation that actually engages in organ harvesting out in the open is not the one that



engages in organ harvesting out in the open is not the one that is actually being accused of it. But China is causing Israel some more trouble than just that.

Shall we now go over to China and Iran? Sure. China and Iran have a lot of business relations. And as luck would have it, just like Iran and Venezuela, they represent the opposite extremes of the political spectrum. Iran is on the extreme right of fascist dictatorship. Venezuela and China are on the extreme left of a sort of jumble between socialism and communism, and they're all pretty much good friends. So it's really no surprise at all that a day after Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, that handsome theocrat of an Iranian dictator, decided to rant again about how much he hates The Zionist Entity, **China comes and says that, hey, they're not really all that interested in slapping sanctions on Iran anyway.** It wouldn't be good for negotiations, they say.

I'm sure their road to hell is paved with the best intentions ever known to man. In China's words, "At present, it [sanctions] is not conducive to diplomatic efforts." The words of Foreign Ministry spokeswoman **Jiang Yu**. How, exactly, is it not conducive to diplomatic efforts? I'll tell you what it's not conducive to. It's not conducive to your trade with Iran. You get less money, and you'll have to charge even more money for those organs you sell from your political prisoners to even out the balance. How much does a local kidney go for anyway these days in China?

And how about this: The Financial Times on Wednesday reported that Chinese state companies began supplying gasoline to Iran earlier in September. They now provide one-third of its imports. Are they in the money...or what?

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