

China busts organ trafficking ring

Published: Aug. 4, 2012 at 1:08 PM

BEIJING, Aug. 4 (UPI) -- BEIJING, Aug. 4 (UPI) -- Chinese police Saturday announced the arrest of 137 suspects in an alleged illegal human organ trafficking ring.

The Ministry of Public Security said the operation carried out late last month also spared 127 "organ suppliers," many of whom were recruited over the Internet to give up body parts for a price.

The ministry said the ring made huge profits while exposing the donors to health risks and the recipients to hefty financial burdens.

Human organ trafficking has become a thriving black market in China since the number of approved transplants is nowhere near the overall demand for new organs, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

Beijing has been trying to expand its organ donation system while at the same time increasing the criminal penalties for underground organ harvesting. Xinhua said a recent poll indicated the Chinese public considers voluntary organ donations to be a "noble act" but also is leery of the risks and benefits.

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