MUMBAI: “The international medical community should reject any knowledge about organ transplant medicine that comes from China as it’s acquired unethically by removing organs from thousands of prisoners forcibly,” said Dr Torsten Trey of the advocacy group, Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting (DAFOH), on Sunday.
Known world over for his relentless work to expose China’s use of organs from political prisoners and organ trafficking, Dr Trey, executive director of DAFOH, was conferred the Mother Teresa Award by Harmony Foundation on Sunday. Abraham Mathai, founder of Harmony Foundation, said the award celebrates the legacy of Mother Teresa. Among the other recipients were Nobel Laureate Kailash Satyarthi, founder of Bachpan Bachao Andolan, and Hussein Al-Qaidi from the office for the rescue of Yazidis.

In 2016, DAFOH was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for its decade-long efforts on raising awareness against forced organ donation.

Dr Trey insisted that there is evidence to show that China continues to illegally harvest organs till date, though the government declared to have stopped the practice in 2015.

Speaking to TOI, Dr Trey called on the global medical community to closely look at the numbers to understand how the world’s most populated country’s organ donation programme is ‘fake’. ‘After they said they no longer harvested organs from prisoners
in 2015, we analysed their official programme data, which is available on a website. We monitored this website for 30 months and found their donation numbers were low,” he said. “Suddenly, on December 30, 2015, we saw the number jump by 25,000 in one day. The same thing happened in December 2016. But after we wrote a paper on that, there was no longer a jump.”

This June, an investigation by the China tribunal—a group of surgeons, human rights activists and lawyers—had unanimously stated that the practice of organ removal was a reality in the country that has carried out ‘unbelievable’ number of transplant surgeries annually. Dr Trey said that China has officially said it would cross 25,000 transplants by 2020. “Which means they are very close to surpassing the programme in the US that has been built over decades,” he added.

He also said that organ trafficking was a way of modern day slavery and not enough was done to stop it. “In organ trafficking, many people give their organs thinking they would gain something. But, our studies have shown that 94% of them regret within 5-6 months of parting with their organ,” Dr Trey said. In countries, like India, where an estimated 2,000 people a year are suspected to fall prey to the racket, Dr Trey advised that information about the after-effects should be widely disseminated.