

How the U.N. Pushes Abortion

According to the United Nations Population Fund, its mission is to provide access to safe, voluntary family planning to women around the world.

But a recent decision by the State Department suggests that the U.N. Population Fund's mission statement is more benign than its actual activities.

On April 3, the State Department announced that it will stop funding to the fund on the grounds that it supports China's unethical family planning policies, which include the practices of coercive abortion and involuntary sterilization.

The State Department noted that the fund "partners on family planning activities with the Chinese government agency responsible for these coercive policies."

The money allocated to the U.N. Population Fund for fiscal year 2017 will now be transferred to the Global Health Programs account to fund other family planning, maternal, and reproductive health activities that do not involve or support coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization.

This should not come as a surprise. China, with its history of a brutal one-child policy, has only recently adjusted to a two-child policy—not because the government suddenly sees the regulation and control of a woman's body is a violation of human rights, but because it realizes the demographic and economic trouble it will face due to a decrease in population.

But as Heritage Foundation experts predicted in their November 2015 report, China's new two-child policy will not solve the demographic challenges the nation currently faces.

This is why Heritage experts called on the U.S. to discontinue funding of the U.N. Population Fund due to the role it played

in the implementation of China's one- and two-child policies.

A Human Rights Disaster

The one-child policy, introduced in 1979 by then-Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping, mandated that couples of China's ethnic Han majority be allowed only one child. The penalties for violating this law ranged from severe fines to forced abortions, and even sterilization.

The appointed village planning officers would keep meticulous records of the menstrual cycles and physical exams of the women in the village of childbearing age. Additionally, if anyone was found to be aware of a woman breaking the law and refused to report it, they too faced serious penalties.

The State Department, in its 2014 human rights report, stated that 336 million abortions and 222 million sterilizations had occurred in China since the beginning of the stringent family policies introduced in 1971, which led to the one-child policy in 1979.

According to the World Health Organization, the rural areas of China have the highest female suicide rate in the world, and it is the only country listed where the number of suicides among women surpasses that of men.

The one-child policy also led to a surge in female infanticide that has now resulted in a disastrous sex ratio of 115 boys to every 100 girls.

The gripping accounts of women who have shared their horrific experiences of forced abortions or sterilization is something that should not be understated or ignored as an integral part of the family planning policies in China.

Things Have Not Changed

Today's two-child policy is no different. It is as much a violation of human rights as its predecessor. It is still a

coercive family planning policy, only now the harsh and brutal penalties are implemented when a married couple has a third child.

New Jersey Rep. Chris Smith, chairman of the House subcommittee on Africa, global health, global human rights and international organizations, spoke out boldly on this matter in a March 8 presentation at The Heritage Foundation.

The congressman stated that “the [U.N. Population Fund] sadly has been complicit in China’s population control policies, right from the beginning. They did not only turn a blind eye to these abuses but helped facilitate and to fund them.”

Smith pointed out that “the apparatus of coercion was constantly being built out, strengthened, and incentivized through money so that people would even turn in their neighbor ... who turned out to be pregnant without authorization by the state.”

While China today faces both an aging population and a shortage of people in the workforce, the small population increase highlighted in recent reports will do little to affect the current demographic imbalances.

Due to social and economic stresses, such as labor discrimination, inadequate health care and gender imbalance, projections show that Chinese women are not likely to have more than one child, even with the implementation of the new policy. Small families have become the custom.

Communist China, with its decades of forced population control, is now facing a crisis of its own making, and its current course correction may just be too little too late.

Turning the Ship Around

The recent decision by the Trump administration to revoke funding for U.N. Population Fund sends a critical message not

just to the fund, but also to China. The United States will no longer tolerate its funds being used to support the inhumane practices of coercive abortions and involuntary sterilization.

The U.S. should go one step further.

At the highest levels of government, the U.S. should press China to end the two-child policy and instead help it to devise policies that allow Chinese families to decide for themselves the number of children they wish to have.

This will help to curb human rights abuses in China, repair the gender imbalance that has emerged and ultimately restore to Chinese families the sense of independence and autonomy that they have always been entitled to.

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