

Chinese Doctor Gets Death Sentence for Trafficking Babies

A Chinese court on Tuesday handed down a suspended death sentence on a doctor who sold seven newborn babies to human traffickers, a case that sparked widespread anger in a country where child trafficking is rampant.

Zhang Shuxia, 55, an obstetrician in northwestern Shaanxi province's Fuping county, was found guilty of selling the babies for as much as 21,600 yuan (\$3,600) each between 2011 and 2013, the court in Weinan city said.

Zhang tricked the parents to give up their newborns by convincing them the infants had incurable diseases or deformities, the court said in a statement on its website.

"Though Zhang Shuxia confessed, her behavior violated both professional and social ethics, had an extremely bad social impact, and the circumstance of the crimes were grave," the court said.

A trafficker threw one sick child into a garbage ditch, presuming she was dead, the statement said. Zhang was not convicted in connection with the child's death, but the court ruled she was partly responsible. The baby was never found.

The other six infants were rescued by police and returned to their families.

The official Xinhua news agency said it was unclear if Zhang, who was detained in August and stood trial in December, would appeal. Suspended death sentences are typically reduced to life in prison.

Child trafficking is widespread in China, where population

control policies have bolstered a traditional bias for male offspring, seen as the main support for elderly parents and heirs to the family name, and have resulted in abortions, killings or abandonment of girls.

The imbalance has created criminal demand for abducted or bought baby boys, but also for baby girls destined to be future brides attracting rich dowries.

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