



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on June 17, 2013

## Chinese Pro-Life Dissident Chen Booted From New York University

Chinese pro-life activist Chen Guangcheng, who was released by Beijing's communist government a year ago and allowed to relocate to the United States, is leaving New York University, and Chen claims the school is being pressured by China's regime to boot him out. Chen, a blind, self-taught lawyer, [escaped to the U.S. Embassy in Beijing last year](#) after suffering years of abuse and imprisonment at the hands of the Chinese government over his efforts to expose the government's repressive one-child policy that includes forced late-term abortions for women and forced sterilization for couples who challenge the system. He was later granted political amnesty in the United States and was invited to relocate to NYU and continue his law studies.



According to the [BBC](#), NYU announced that Chen would leave this summer and that his tenure at the school was never meant to be open-ended. "We were pleased to offer Mr Chen and his family a place to come and study and support his transition to the U.S. when he first left China," NYU spokesman John Beckman was quoted by BBC as saying. He added that "NYU and Mr Chen had discussions beginning last fall that NYU could not support him indefinitely."

But the [New York Times](#) reported Sunday, June 16, that Chen accused NYU of bowing to pressure from the Chinese government to force him to leave. "In a statement released Sunday, Mr. Chen said university officials were worried that his outspoken criticism of the Chinese government might threaten academic cooperation," reported the *Times*. "NYU recently opened a campus in Shanghai, and a number of professors are involved in programs and research projects here that could be harmed if they were denied Chinese visas."

In his statement Chen said that the "work of the Chinese Communists within academic circles in the United States is far greater than what people imagine, and some scholars have no option but to hold themselves back. Academic independence and academic freedom in the United States are being greatly threatened by a totalitarian regime."

Beckman said that NYU officials were "very discouraged to learn of Mr. Chen's statement, which contains a number of speculations about the role of the Chinese government in NYU's decision-making that are both false and contradicted by the well-established facts." He added that the university was "puzzled and saddened" by Chen's charges, but would continue to help him and his family transition to a new location and school.

Dr. Jerome Cohen, a NYU law professor who had helped secure Chen's fellowship at the school, told



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BBC that NYU officials had always considered the arrangement a temporary one designed to help Chen and his family “get their feet on the ground and transition to a more permanent position.” Cohen insisted that “no political refugee, even Albert Einstein, has received better treatment by an American academic institution than that received by Mr. Chen from NYU.”

The [New York Post](#), which first broke the story June 13 of Chen’s impending expulsion from NYU, reported that, according to an anonymous source, “Chen’s presence at the school didn’t sit well with the Chinese bureaucrats who signed off on the permits for NYU’s expansion there. ‘The big problem is that NYU is very compromised by the fact they are working very closely with the Chinese to establish a university [in China],’ according to one New York-based professor familiar with Chen’s situation, who spoke on the condition of anonymity. ‘That’s their liability,’ the source said. ‘Otherwise, they would be much less constrained on issues like freedom of speech.’”

But NYU spokesman Beckman countered, insisting to the *Post* that “if there were outside pressure, why would we have taken him in the first place when his plight was on every front page in the world?” Beckman claimed that the university got approval from the communist Chinese government for a NYU branch in Shanghai several months after Chen arrived in the United States.

According to the *Post*, however, “insiders said NYU has felt itself increasingly vulnerable to pressure from China as the Shanghai campus project moves forward. ‘Apart from the initial press hoopla, [Chen] really hasn’t had any kind of profile at NYU this year,’ said Andrew Ross, an NYU professor of social and cultural studies. Ordinarily, he noted, Chen ‘would have done seminars, he would have done panel discussions.’” But over the past year, noted the *Post*, the pro-life dissident “has had little communication with NYU President John Sexton, who has been spearheading the school’s expansion into Shanghai and Abu Dhabi, a source said.”

If what Chen alleges is true, he may have trouble transferring to a major U.S. university to continue his law studies. According to the *New York Times*, “many colleges have grown increasingly reliant on the tuition from the 194,000 Chinese students who enrolled at American universities last year, a 23 percent increase over the previous year. A number of universities, including Johns Hopkins, Yale, and Duke, have programs or satellite campuses in China or are planning them.”

Universities that have such partnerships with the communist regime may be reluctant to invite Chen, whose research into China’s forced abortion and one-child policies reaped revelations that have led to sullen, angry responses from a clearly embarrassed Chinese government.

Bob Fu of the Texas-based ChinaAid, a Christian group which has supported Chen and helped to increase exposure of his charges concerning the regime’s repressive abortion policies, “recounted a conversation in which Mr. Chen lamented what he perceived to be the Chinese government’s growing influence in the United States,” reported the *Times*. “‘He felt a tremendous sadness knowing how academia was kowtowing to the Chinese government,’ Mr. Fu said.”

In a statement Fu said that “U.S. universities are out chasing the China dollar and are very reluctant to work with dissidents who have a strong voice in China. It does not always have to be direct pressure from Beijing. There is also self-censorship, particularly if a college president believes their China campus or the future enrollment of Chinese students will be sabotaged.”

Among the research that Chen has done over the past several years is a particularly damning report which documents at least 7,000 forced abortions by the Chinese regime, complete with the names and addresses of the women who were victimized under the government’s horrific one-child policy. Reggie



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Littlejohn, president of the organization [Women's Rights Without Frontiers](#), has released an English translation of [Chen's field notes](#) documenting the horrors, which, noted [LifeNews.com](#), "are shocking, even for those familiar with the forced abortion abuses that take place as a result of China's one-child policy."

[Fox News](#) reported that since his relocation to the United States, Chen "has complained that Chinese authorities have reneged on assurances made to U.S. diplomats that his relatives would be treated according to the law. His nephew, Chen Kegui, was sentenced to 39 months in jail after he clashed with local officials who stormed into his parents' house in the wake of the activist's escape. Chen family supporters say the prosecution and sentence were retribution for the embarrassment the case has caused Chinese officials."

And in May, continued the Fox report, Chen's oldest brother "complained that he and his family were subject to constant harassment by local thugs who beat him, distributed flyers with insulting language, and tossed dead animals into the family yard."

*Photo of Chen Guangcheng: AP Images*



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