



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on May 2, 2012

China Assures Safety of Pro-Life Dissident, Women and Babies Still in Danger

Chen Guangcheng, the outspoken Chinese pro-life advocate who slipped past that country's security police to escape house arrest and find refuge in the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, left the embassy May 2, reported the [New York Times](#), after assurances by the Chinese government that he and his family would be safe. According to U.S. officials involved in the tense six-day standoff during which an embarrassed Chinese government excoriated the U.S. for intruding in its affairs, Chen called Secretary of State Hillary Clinton after leaving the embassy compound to thank her for intervening on his behalf.



Clinton issued a statement saying she was "pleased that we were able to facilitate Chen Guangcheng's stay and departure from the U.S. Embassy in a way that reflected his choices and our values. I was glad to have the chance to speak with him today and to congratulate him on being reunited with his wife and children." Clinton added that the Chinese pro-life leader "has a number of understandings with the Chinese government about his future, including the opportunity to pursue higher education in a safe environment. Making these commitments a reality is the next crucial task."

The blind Chen, who has suffered severe persecution for his role in exposing China's repressive one-child policy for families — and its record of forced abortion for mothers who insist on giving birth to more children — slipped away from Chinese authorities April 22 and was given refuge in the U.S. Embassy because of the "exceptional circumstances, including his disabilities," an American official traveling with Clinton told reporters in Beijing. "On humanitarian grounds we assisted him and allowed him to remain on a temporary basis," the official added.

During his stay at the embassy, reported the *Times*, Chen "adhered to his position that he was not seeking asylum in the United States but wanted to stay with his family in China as a free person, said the official, who was involved in the three-way negotiations that involved Mr. Chen and officials from the United States and China. 'He expressed his hope to stay in China and he never varied from that,' a



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second senior official involved in the negotiations, who briefed reporters, said.”

After several hours of meetings that included Chen, American officials, and the Chinese government, an agreement was reached whereby Chen will be transferred from his hometown in Shandong Province, where he had been under house arrest on and off since 2005 and where, he said, his family had suffered physical attacks. Chen will reportedly be allowed to enroll at a Chinese university to study law, a profession in which he has been self-taught and which he has pursued for several years.

While American officials insisted that they were satisfied with assurances by China that it will not retaliate against Chen or continue harassing him, it was not immediately clear how Chen’s treatment at the hands of the repressive regime would be monitored. “There appeared to be no similar case in which a high-profile Chinese dissident had sought protection at the American Embassy and then returned to Chinese custody,” reported the *Times*. “American human rights officials and lawyers have often questioned whether the Chinese would provide the protection they promised in such a situation.”

What is clear is that Chinese officials were wroth with the U.S. government for its intervention in Chen’s high-profile case. China has always considered criticism of its oppressive human rights record as interference in its domestic affairs — and outside intervention into its abusive behavior as absolutely off-limits.

At the height of the crisis, as Chen was holed up inside the U.S. Embassy, one of the country’s foreign ministry spokesmen, Liu Weimin, ripped into the U.S. for its interference. “It must be pointed out that the United States Embassy took the Chinese citizen Chen Guangcheng into the embassy in an irregular manner, and China expresses its strong dissatisfaction over this,” Liu said in a statement.

“The U.S. method was interference in Chinese domestic affairs, and this is totally unacceptable to China. China demands that the United States apologize over this, thoroughly investigate this incident, punish those who are responsible, and give assurances that such incidents will not recur.”

Shortly after Chen’s release, a Chinese human rights lawyer, Jiang Tianyong, told [Reuters News](#) that he had been rebuffed in his attempts to check in with Chen. “Just now I tried to see him, but I was prohibited from entering [the hospital],” Jiang said. “They said ‘he is currently being examined, you’ll have to find another time.’ So right now there’s no way. I can’t get in.”

According to the Associated Press, China’s treatment of Chen and his family over the past several years makes its assurances of their safety and humane treatment since his “repatriation” suspect, to say the least. Up until his dramatic escape, “Chen and his family had been harassed and kept under house arrest since the summer of 2005,” reported AP, “except for a four-year period when Chen was jailed on charges of disrupting traffic and restrictions were eased on his wife and daughter.”

Following Chen’s release from custody in September 2010, “the family was again placed under house arrest, their movements severely restricted, with even six-year-old daughter Kesi subjected to searches when she came home from school,” continued AP. “Chen and his wife, Yuan Weijing, were beaten several times.”

[LifeNews.com](#) noted that China has good reason to want to silence Chen, an outspoken voice against the country’s forced abortion policies. According to the pro-life news site, “Reggie Littlejohn, president of [Women’s Rights Without Frontiers](#), has released a compendium of Chen Guangcheng’s field notes about forced abortion and sterilization in China and the stories the blind attorney compiled are shocking, even for those familiar with the forced abortion abuses that take place as a result of China’s one-child policy.”



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Littlejohn told LifeNews that her organization had obtained a copy of Chen's notes and had released an [English translation of them](#). "A member of Chen's team, human rights attorney Teng Biao, drafted this 2005 investigative report into coercive family planning in Linyi City, Shandong Province," Littlejohn said. "The report contains extensive witness statements from cases Chen and his team were investigating before Chen was jailed."

Among the most grievous examples of China's merciless abuse included in Chen's report are:

- A woman forced to undergo an abortion at seven months, followed by forced sterilization.
- Villagers forced to sleep in fields in order to evade China's family planning enforcers.
- Family Planning officials breaking three brooms over the head of an elderly man.
- Family Planning officials forcing a grandmother and her brother to beat each other.
- The practice by Family Planning officials of "implication" — detaining, fining, and torturing extended family members of those who have "violated" China's one-child policy.

While Chen's report dates from around 2005, Littlejohn said that recent evidence shows that China's forced-abortion policy has not changed in the ensuing years. A photo of a ["full term baby floating in the bucket"](#) in which it was drowned circulated widely on Weibo, the Chinese equivalent of Twitter, eliciting widespread outrage," Littlejohn noted to LifeNews. She added that "in April 2011, Family Planning officials stabbed a man to death when attempting to seize his sister for a forced sterilization." And, Littlejohn recalled, "in October 2011, a woman, six months pregnant, [died during a forced abortion](#) in Lijing County...."

Littlejohn advised that "Chen may be safe for the moment, but the women for whom he risked everything are not. Forced abortion is not a choice. It is official government rape. Until women in China are free to exercise perhaps their most fundamental right — the right to bear children — the nation of China will not be free."

Photo: Blind activist Chen Guangcheng, center, is seen in a village in China: AP Images



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