

Chinese Forced Abortion Opponent Pleads for US Asylum

With the whole world watching, Christian activists are crying out for the United States to grant asylum to **Chen Guangcheng** and his family, along with the activist who rescued him, He Peirong. Chen and his wife have both stated that they are in danger.

U.S. officials contend that Chen left the U.S. Embassy on Wednesday of his own volition to seek medical treatment at a hospital. From the hospital, however, Chen told friends and the media that he was not given full information on which to base his decision. He told the Associated Press that a U.S. official relayed a threat that if he did not leave the Embassy, his wife would be beaten to death. He told CNN, "I am very disappointed at the U.S. government."

"It is a disgrace and outrage that Mr. Chen, who was in the protective custody of the American Embassy, has now been allowed to be turned over to the Chinese government where he and his family will face unspeakable violence and brutality," says Patrick Mahoney, director of the Christian Defense Coalition, who is organizing a prayer for a Guangcheng vigil at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW at noon on Friday. "The only reason Mr. Chen left the Embassy was because he was told that his wife would be beaten if he did not leave immediately. He now wants to leave China and fears for his safety and the safety of his family."

Chen also told CNN that after he escaped, his wife was tied to a chair in their home for two days. Guards carried sticks into their home and threatened to beat her to death. They also moved into their house, eating at their table and using their belongings. They have installed seven surveillance cameras inside their home. These facts convinced Chen that it would

not be safe for him or his family to remain in China. He did not learn these facts until he was reunited with his wife in the hospital.

“Many have regarded the U.S. Embassy as the lone island of freedom and justice in a land filled with repression and injustice. Given their trust, how could the U.S. hand over a deserving citizen who had fled there for protection?” asks Reggie Littlejohn, president of Women’s Rights Without Frontiers. “Chen is hugely symbolic in China, widely loved and admired. By challenging the One Child Policy, he is challenging the lynchpin of social control in China. This explains why Chen is not just an ordinary dissident, but rather symbolizes the heart and conscience of the nation. It also explains the ferocity of the Chinese Communist Party’s reaction to him.”

As Littlejohn sees it, when Chen fled to the U.S. Embassy, the U.S. had a golden opportunity to do the right thing—give him and his family asylum and bring them to safety in the U.S. She says this would have erased a generation of anti-American propaganda and inspired gratitude, admiration and trust among the Chinese people.

“Instead the U.S. quickly dispatched Chen out the door, shattering our moral credibility before the world and losing the hearts and minds of a generation of Chinese people who share our values. How “strategic” is this?” Littlejohn asks. “The only way to redeem the situation is as clear as it is urgent: give asylum to Chen and his family—and to He Peirong as well. Bring them to safety in the United States, whatever it takes, on Hillary Clinton’s plane.”

Mahoney says it is critical that Obama not betray Chen and the principles of justice that he has been imprisoned, beaten and tortured for.

“Mr. President this is watershed moment for America,” Mahoney

says. "We respectfully ask that you do not break covenant with the values and principles of this nation and ensure that Chen Guangcheng and his family are secure and protected. The eyes of the world are watching."