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## Feng Jianmei and International Outrage – An Update Concerning Forced Abortion in China

Testimony of Reggie Littlejohn, President

Women's Rights Without Frontiers

July 9, 2012

Continued Human Rights Attacks

On Families in China

House Committee on Foreign Affairs,

Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights

Thank you, Chairman Smith and Members of the Subcommittee, for the opportunity to testify today regarding the case of Feng Jianmei, as well as several other alarming cases of forced abortion that have arisen recently in China. I am also thrilled that the European Parliament has passed a resolution strongly condemning forced abortions and sterilizations globally, and has called for a review to ensure that the funding it provides for family planning in China is not used for coercion.

The case of Feng Jianmei is one of several that have emerged in swift succession, most of these following on the heels of blind activist Chen Guangcheng's May 19 arrival in the United States.

**Linyi City, Shandong Province.** March 2012. A photo of a forcibly aborted full term baby drowned in a bucket, submitted anonymously, circulated on Weibo, the Chinese version of Twitter, and in the West. The infant reportedly cried at birth, but was drowned in a bucket by family planning personnel.<sup>1</sup> Blind activist Chen Guangcheng comes from Linyi and was still under house arrest at the time news of this forced abortion broke. This incident demonstrates

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<sup>1</sup> Kathleen Gilbert. "Photo of a baby aborted in China at 9 months in forced abortion circulates on internet, sparks outrage." 4/3/12 <http://www.lifesitenews.com/news/photo-of-baby-aborted-in-china-at-9-months-in-forced-abortion-circulates-on/>

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that forced abortion up to the ninth month of pregnancy still occurs in Linyi, as first disclosed by Chen in his report of 2005.<sup>2</sup>

**Cao Ruyi, Changsha City, Hunan Province.** June 2012 and ongoing. Five months pregnant, Cao Ruyi was detained by Family Planning Officials, who beat her husband and attempted to forcibly abort her. They demanded that she pay the Chinese equivalent of approximately \$24,000, or face forced abortion. Because of international pressure, this amount was reduced and Cao was allowed to leave the hospital, but she remains in jeopardy. Jing Zhang, President of Women's Rights in China, has arranged for Cao Ruyi and her husband to remain in hiding until their baby is born.<sup>3</sup>

**Feng Jianmei, Ankang City, Shaanxi Province.** June 2, 2012. Breaking within days of the case of Cao Ruyi, Feng Jianmei was forcibly aborted at seven months when she and her husband, Deng Jiyuan, could not pay a 40,000 yuan fine (\$6300). Officials tried to force Feng into a car, but she escaped to her aunt's house. They broke through the gate, so she fled to the mountains, where officials found her hiding under a bed. Her husband told The Economist, "They laughed when they found her."<sup>4</sup> After forcibly aborting her baby, officials laid the bloody body of her dead daughter next to her in the bed. The story and photograph, which WRWF broke to the west on June 12, 2012, immediately went viral, sent shockwaves around the world, and ignited a firestorm of outrage.<sup>5</sup>

In the aftermath, the local Ankang City government apologized, several officials were given administrative demerits, and one reportedly was terminated. The sincerity of these gestures, however, is questionable, given the fact that at the same time, protests were organized outside Feng's family home. Protesters carried a large banner reading "Beat the traitors, drive them from the town." According to local media reports, these protests were organized by local authorities, in retaliation for Deng's interview with a German journalist. At this time, Deng disappeared for several days, during which time Feng did not know where he was.<sup>6</sup>

Deng has since reappeared, having traveled to Beijing to seek legal help. He is calling for justice, including both monetary compensation and criminal prosecution of those responsible for forcibly aborting Feng.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Congressional-Executive Commission on China Hearing of December 6, 2011, releasing the Chen Guangcheng Report. [http://www.womensrightswithoutfrontiers.org/?nav=congressional\\_hearing\\_2011](http://www.womensrightswithoutfrontiers.org/?nav=congressional_hearing_2011)

<sup>3</sup> Jing Zhang. "China's One Child Policy – Two Cases." American Spectator, 6/15/12. <http://spectator.org/archives/2012/06/15/chinas-one-child-policy-two-ca>

<sup>4</sup> "The Brutal Truth: A shocking case of forced abortion fuels resentment against China's One Child Policy." 6/23/12. <http://www.economist.com/node/21557369>

<sup>5</sup> Reggie Littlejohn, "BREAKING: Chinese Woman Forcibly Aborted at Seven Months." 6/12/12 <http://www.womensrightswithoutfrontiers.org/blog/?p=667>

<sup>6</sup> "China punishes officials over late-term abortion case." 6/27/12. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-18605767>

Josh Chin. "Mom Cites Pressure in One-Child Saga." 6/28/12 <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303561504577492413851079538.html>

<sup>7</sup> Father in China forced abortion case demands criminal prosecution, seeks compensation. 7/6/12 [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/father-in-china-forced-abortion-case-demands-criminal-prosecution-sues-for-compensation/2012/07/06/qJOAx4GLRW\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/father-in-china-forced-abortion-case-demands-criminal-prosecution-sues-for-compensation/2012/07/06/qJOAx4GLRW_story.html)

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As of an Associated Press report, Feng was still in the hospital on July 6 – more than a month after her forced abortion.<sup>8</sup> Earlier, she had said that she was ready to leave the hospital and felt that remaining hospitalized weeks after the forced abortion felt like “prison.”<sup>9</sup>

Feng’s case has become symbolic of the heinous human rights abuses suffered by the women of China at the hands of the Chinese Communist population control machine. Feng’s forced abortion and the subsequent persecution of her family, however, have not been in vain. Feng was specifically cited by the European Parliament in its resolution condemning coercive family planning.

**Hu Jia, Jianli County, Hubei Province.** June 19, 2012. China’s Southern Metropolis Daily reported that Hu Jia was forcibly aborted at nearly eight months. This case was reported by a major Chinese newspaper, indicating the growing discontent with the policy inside China and the courage of the Chinese news media to report it.<sup>10</sup>

**Zhang Wen Fang, Hong Hu City, Hubei Province** (2008) – Inspired by the outrage generated by the case of Feng Jianmei, Zhan Wen Fang stepped forward to report that she had been forcibly aborted at nine months in 2008. Along with her baby, family planning officials removed her uterus, cervix and one ovary. Previously a successful business owner, she is now confined to a wheelchair and dependant on her aging mother. She states that her older child is “like an orphan,” without much support from her. She came forward stating, “I would like to ensure that no more families ever have to go through what I have been through, to be butchered like this.”<sup>11</sup>

### **Pressure builds in Europe and the United States**

This spate of barbaric cases has focused criticism against coercive family planning in China.

European Parliament. In a striking blow against China’s One Child Policy, the European Parliament last week passed a resolution strongly condemning forced abortion and involuntary sterilization in China and globally, citing Feng Jianmei. Specifically, the resolution, 2012/2712 (RSP) “strongly condemns the decision to force Ms. Feng to have an abortion and condemns the practice of forced abortions and sterilizations globally, especially in the context of the one-child policy.” The resolution further states that “the EU has provided, and still provides, funds for organizations involved in family planning policies in China,” and “urges the Commission to ensure that its funding of projects does not breach” the European Parliament’s commitment against coercive population control.

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<sup>8</sup> Father in China forced abortion case demands criminal prosecution, seeks compensation. 7/6/12  
[http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/father-in-china-forced-abortion-case-demands-criminal-prosecution-sues-for-compensation/2012/07/06/qJOAx4GLRW\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/father-in-china-forced-abortion-case-demands-criminal-prosecution-sues-for-compensation/2012/07/06/qJOAx4GLRW_story.html)

<sup>9</sup> Josh Chin. Mom Cites Pressure in One-Child Saga. 6/28/12 <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303561504577492413851079538.html>

<sup>10</sup> Patrick Burke. “Another Forced Abortion Case Reported as Abuses Under China’s ‘One-Child’ Policy Get More Attention” 7/2/12  
<http://cnsnews.com/news/article/another-forced-abortion-case-reported-abuses-under-china-s-one-child-policy-get-more>

<sup>11</sup> “Chinese woman comes forward with forced abortion story” 7/3/12  
<http://www.allgirlsallowed.org/another-woman-comes-forward-harrowing-story-forced-abortion>

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I have twice addressed the European Parliament on the One Child Policy, and I know how passionate the MEPs are, both from the pro-life and the pro-choice perspectives.<sup>12</sup> The fact that these forces were able to join together to condemn forced abortion is a masterpiece of coalition building. As WRWF's message has been from the beginning, whether you are pro-life or pro-choice, no one supports forced abortion, because it is not a choice.

Additionally, it is significant that the European Parliament has acknowledged that it provides funding for family planning in China, and urged the Commission to ensure that this funding is not associated with coercion. For decades, the UNFPA and International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) have worked hand in hand with the Chinese population control machine, which is coercive. They are funded by many nations, not only in Europe but the world over, including the United States. I have no doubt that any unbiased investigation by the European Parliament or any other governmental body will reveal that these organizations are complicit with coercive family planning in China.

I hope that this courageous action by the European Parliament will serve as a model for governments all over the world, including the United States, to join the outcry against forced abortion in China -- and to stop funding it.

U.S. State Department. On the domestic front, State Department spokesman Victoria Nuland, condemned forced abortion while expressing concern for the case of Cao Ruyi. "We've seen the reports that a Chinese woman is being detained and possibly pressured into a forced abortion by Chinese family planning authorities after purportedly violating China's one-child policy," she told reporters during a press briefing. "We have reached out to the authorities in Beijing to ask about this issue." Nuland reiterated that the U.S. strongly opposes "all aspects of China's coercive birth limitation policies," which they have deemed a serious human rights abuse.<sup>13</sup>

Center for Reproductive Rights. In an encouraging development, Nancy Northup, President of the Center for Reproductive Rights, wrote a letter to the editor of the New York Times, referencing the case of Feng Jianmei and condemning forced abortion in China.<sup>14</sup> This was a courageous act on Northup's part. If NARAL, Planned Parent, NOW and the UNFPA truly stand for choice, they will join Northup in condemning forced abortion in China. If they do not condemn forced abortion, they do not stand for choice.

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<sup>12</sup> I am told that in 2008, I was the first person to address the European Parliament on the issue of the One Child Policy. This 2008 address comprises the chapter on the One Child Policy in the book, "Human Rights in China After the Olympic Games," currently available on Amazon.com [http://www.amazon.com/Human-Rights-China-After-Olympics/dp/1448610567/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1247847877&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Human-Rights-China-After-Olympics/dp/1448610567/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1247847877&sr=1-1)

<sup>13</sup> Alexandra Ludka and Gloria Riviera. "Forced Abortion in China Prompts Apology and Three Officials Suspended." 6/15/12 [http://abcnews.go.com/International/forced-abortion-china-prompts-apology-officials-suspended/story?id=16579517#.T\\_e2WXAi07A](http://abcnews.go.com/International/forced-abortion-china-prompts-apology-officials-suspended/story?id=16579517#.T_e2WXAi07A)

<sup>14</sup> Nancy Northup. Letter to the Editor, New York Times, "Forced Abortion in China," 7/4/12. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/05/opinion/forced-abortion-in-china.html>

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WRWF urges both the State Department and the Center for Reproductive Rights to back up their words with effective actions.<sup>15</sup>

### **Pressure Builds Within China**

In the wake of these cases, it was reported last week that two brave groups within China have called for the reform or relinquishment of the One Child Policy. According to the China Economic Times, several researchers in the Developmental Research Center – a prestigious, government-affiliated think tank -- cited the coming demographic disaster caused by low birth rates combined with an ageing population as the reason for China to move to a two-child policy. "The longer we wait, the more vulnerable we will be," they stated.<sup>16</sup>

While I agree that China is facing a nearly-irreversible demographic disaster caused by the One Child Policy, I do not agree that instituting a two-child policy is the answer to the problems created by the One Child Policy. First, a two-child policy encourages gendercide, the sex-selective abortion of baby girls. In areas where couples can have a second child if the first is a girl, gendercide is rampant. According to a 2009 study by the British Medical Journal, the average birth ratio in China is 120 boys for every hundred girls born. But for second births, that number jumps to 143 boys for every hundred girls. In two provinces, Jiangsu and Anhui, for the second child, there were 190 boys for every hundred girls born.<sup>17</sup>

The central issue in the One Child Policy, moreover, is not whether the government allows couples to have one or two children. Rather, it is the coercion with which this limit is enforced. Even with a two-child policy, women will still be subject to forced abortion if they get pregnant without a birth permit.

Last week a second call for reform came from a prominent group of scholars who criticized the policy on the basis that it violates human rights and works against economic stability. Fifteen brave intellectuals signed an open letter urging that re-writing of family planning law was

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<sup>15</sup> Concerning backing up words with actions, it is appropriate here to mention ardent pro-choice feminist, Cori Schumacher, the 2011 reigning Women's World Longboard Surfing Champion. Schumacher boycotted the 2011 World Tour because one of the events was to be held in China. Citing Women's Rights Without Frontiers and the November 10, 2009 hearing before the United States Congress Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission (called by Rep. Chris Smith), Schumacher wrote the following to the Association of Surfing Professionals (ASP):

"I have deep political and personal reservations with being a part of any sort of benefit to a country that actively engages in human rights violations, specifically those in violation of women. The ASP's reconnaissance of possible sites in China for events last year and its first ASP event in China followed an important US congressional hearing on China's "One Child Policy," a policy sanctioned by the Chinese government that is implicated in gendercide, sexual slavery, forced sterilization and forced abortions. (<http://www.womensrightswithoutfrontiers.org/index.php?nav=congressional>)"

Cori Schumacher, "Women's Rights Without Frontiers; Standing her Ground," Curl Magazine, 12/17/11 <http://corischumacher.com/tag/womens-rights-without-frontiers/>

<sup>16</sup> Josh Chin. "Think Tank Calls China to Adjust One-Child Policy" 7/3/12  
[http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304211804577504360440496118.html?mod=googlenews\\_wsi](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304211804577504360440496118.html?mod=googlenews_wsi)

<sup>17</sup> Wei Xing Zhu, Li Lu and Therese Hesketh. (2009) BMJ: China's excess males, sex-selective abortion and one child policy: analysis of data from 2005 national intercensus survey. <http://www.bmjjournals.org/content/338/bmj.b1211.abstract>

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"imperative." One of their leaders, well-known Internet entrepreneur James Liang, is calling for the abolition of the one-child rule.<sup>18</sup>

## Policy Recommendations

Members of the U.S. Congress are encouraged to:

- Adopt a resolution condemning forced abortion and sterilization in China and urging the Chinese Communist Party to dismantle the coercive population control machine, in light of recent cases, bringing family planning in conformance with the 1995 Beijing Declaration, the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development, and CEDAW.
- Urge the Chinese Communist Party vigorously to investigate and criminally prosecute Family Planning Officials and others responsible for the forced abortions of Feng Jianmei, Hu Jia and Zhang Wen Fang. Give Cao Ruyi permission to have her second child. Return all fines paid by these women and compensate them and their families for their injuries.
- Urge the Chinese Communist Party to cease the use of all quotas for abortion and sterilization, which quota system leads to coercion. Urge the Chinese Communist Party to delink financial and professional advancement from meeting population control quotas, thus removing the incentive for coercion.
- Investigate UNFPA and IPPF for complicity with coercive family planning in China. If complicity is found, funding should be cut.
- Pass an act concerning the responsibility of U.S. corporations doing business in China, that they should not be complicit in coercive family planning in their factories.
- Press for the freedom of blind activist Chen Guangcheng's nephew, Chen Kegui, who has been wrongfully detained on charges of attempted murder. Chen Kegui and his family were violently attacked by local authorities when it was discovered that his uncle had escaped. Chen Kegui acted in self defense.
- Pass a "China Democracy Promotion Act," which would enable the President to deny entry into the U.S. for Chinese nationals who have committed human rights abuses against people in China, including anyone who has participated in the imposition of China's coercive birth limitation policy. This Act would be similar to H.R. 2121, proposed in 2011 by Rep. Chris Smith.

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<sup>18</sup> Josh Chin. Another High-Profile Call to Revisit China's One-Child Rule, 7/5/12  
<http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2012/07/05/another-high-profile-call-to-revisit-chinas-one-child-rule/>

