



New Jersey's Fourth Congressional District

Chair of the House human rights subcommittee, Co-chair of Congressional-Executive China Commission, Sr. Member of Foreign Affairs Committee, Lantos Human Rights Commission

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<http://chrissmith.house.gov>

Blind Activist Chen, Family of Jailed Writer Focus on Plight of Guo

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The re-arrest of writer and human rights defender Guo Feixiong in China, was the focus of a press conference and congressional hearing held by Chairman Chris Smith (NJ-04) of the House global human rights subcommittee and co-chairman of the U.S. Congressional-Executive China Commission, along with other Members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Guo's wife, daughter, and other hearing witnesses tried to bring attention to Guo's plight.

Testifying at a hearing entitled "Guo Feixiong and Freedom of Expression in China," were **Chen Guangcheng**, the blind human rights lawyer and ex-political prisoner of the Chinese government who escaped from house arrest in 2012 amid an international furor, reached the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, and eventually settled in the U.S.; **Zhang Qing**, wife of Guo Feixiong and **Yang "Sara" Tianjiao**, his daughter; Pastor **Bob Fu**, Founder and President, ChinaAid Association, and; **T. Kumar** of Amnesty International (AI).

Guo's daughter, Tianjiao "Sara" Yang, told reporters and the congressional panel she was grateful to have opportunity to speak about her father whom she last saw seven years ago in 2006 when she was only 10. She recounted how he bought her a video game, and how they played it almost every day during that summer. But on Sept. 14, 2006 when she came back from school, he was gone.

"I have not seen him since that day," she said. **"I did not even have a chance to say 'bye' or 'I love you' to him. Over the past seven years, I have dreamed about him a lot. I dreamed that he would play that video game with me again so we could pass level five together. But they were only dreams. The next day I always found myself in tears."**

Smith said Guo's detention appears to be reprisal for his support of government transparency and calls for accountability. In recent months, Beijing has cracked down harshly on dozens of similar-minded advocates seeking political reforms.

"These detentions signify Chinese citizens' growing resolve and Beijing's growing fears," Smith said. **"Guo, and many others throughout China, want change. They want accountability, they want transparency, and they want justice. And, increasingly, they are willing to endure great risks and willing to sacrifice their own personal security to speak freely."**

[Click here to read chairman's statement.](#)

Chen, who appeared via Skype, called on the controlling Communist Central Party (CCP) to stop persecuting religious believers and respect religious freedom. He noted over 120 Tibetan monks have set themselves on fire. Some fighting against tyranny have been shot one and he recounted “indescribable persecution” of Falun Gong practitioners.

“I call on lawyers and legal experts of the United States and the American Bar Association to advocate for the human rights lawyers of China and make joint efforts to provide them with some specific legal support and assistance,” Chen said.

Chen, who served years in prison for accepting court cases of women fighting forced abortions, also called to end China’s one-child policy and forcible abortion “because forcing women to abort their babies is a violation of universal human rights. It tramples on women’s rights, the right of free choice, and also the sacred right of life.” The policy also results in a severe imbalance in gender ratio and a rapidly aging population.

Zhang Qing thanked the panel for the opportunity to describe her husband Guo Feixiong personally, as well as his legal case and activities in defending human rights.

“In China today, human rights conditions continue to deteriorate,” she said. **“In a new round of government crackdowns on civil movements this summer, my husband, Guo Feixiong, was detained again. This is his fourth time in prison within two years since he was released on September 13, 2011, after serving five years in prison on a false conviction.”**

She said her husband was charged with “gathering a mob to disrupt the order of a public site.” It was speculated that his detention was caused by his support of the newspaper *The Southern Weekly*, and a speech he delivered in public challenging China’s system of censorship on books and newspapers.

A former novelist and businessman, Guo (whose real name is Yang Maodong but is far better known by his pen-name Guo Feixiong) became widely known in 2005 for organizing protests of land seizures on the outskirts of Guangzhou city. In 2007, a Chinese court sentenced Guo to five years’ imprisonment on trumped up charges of illegal publishing.

“Amnesty International considers Guo Feixiong a prisoner of conscience, who should be immediately and unconditionally released,” said Kumar, AI’s Director of International Advocacy.

[To watch video of the hearing or to read Chen’s, Guo’s family’s and Amnesty International’s statements, hit control and click here.](#)