

Hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to be held by the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building

DATE: Friday, December 5, 2013

TIME: 11:00 a.m.

SUBJECT: The Daughters Appeal to Beijing: "Let Our Fathers Go!"

CHAIRMAN: Christopher H. Smith(R-NJ)

(Translating for Chen Guangfu is Dr. Linda Zhao)

I am Chen Guangfu, the older brother of Chen Guangcheng and father of Chen Kegui. Speaking of the Chen Kegui's case, it is impossible not to mention the Chen Guangcheng case because Chen Kegui's case is the continuation of persecution against Chen Guangcheng. Without Chen Guangcheng's escape, Chen Kegui's case wouldn't exist. The continued imprisonment of Chen Kegui is punishment for Chen Guangcheng's escape.

At the end of April 2012, Chen Guangcheng risked his life to escape from his tightly-guarded house before he entered the U.S. Embassy in Beijing with help of his friends. One week later the authorities found that the object of their surveillance had disappeared. The news hit the authorities like a thunderbolt.

At 9:30 a.m. on April 26, 2012, Ren Zongju, Chen Kegui's mother, heard a stranger making a phone call at the entrance of the village: "Only Yuan Weijing and the old woman are at his house; Chen Guangcheng has disappeared."

Still, that day passed by without much disturbance.

Around midnight on April 27, Chen Fubing, my grandson and the son of Chen Kegui, had a high fever. It took me a while to feed him medicine and sponge his body with alcohol. I was ready to go to bed when I suddenly heard a car screech to a halt in the courtyard outside, immediately followed by a noise of loud banging on the door. I quickly got up to dress, but no sooner had I put on my pants than my head was roughly covered with the shirt I didn't have time to put on, by the people breaking in my house. I was kidnapped with my hands tied behind my back.

Later on I learned that the gangsters who broke into my house were officers from the Economic Affairs Investigation Unit of the Yinan County Police Department led by unit leader Xu Kewei. The officers were not in uniform, nor did they show me legal papers.

It is said that during the trial, the court sustained that the police officers gained entry by climbing over the wall, breaking the lock from inside, and kicking down the door.

A witness, Wang Yunqing testified that the officers came out of the house just one or two minutes later—proof that the perpetrators acted swiftly.

I was taken to the Yinan County Economic Affairs Investigation Unit and put through 72 hours of non-stop torture, during which I was tied to an interrogation chair with handcuffs and foot chains. They showered me with abusive language, struck me hard on the face, trampled on my toes, whipped me, deprived me of food, drink, and sleep, and denied me the use of the restroom, as well as other inhumane treatments.

About twenty minutes after my kidnapping, the head of Shuanghou Township, Zhang Jian, led two dozen personnel, armed with picks, into my house, rummaging through every room without any legal justification. They carried off cash, cell phones, ID cards, documents, and other items. They damaged the television set, sewing machine, and furniture. They pried open several locked drawers and confiscated everything in them.

During the search, they beat up Chen Kegui's mother, while Kegui was chased from outside to inside the house and beaten with clubs the mob was carrying. Kegui was knocked down several times and left with injuries on his face, neck, arms, and legs. When Kegui's mother was trying to protect her son with her body, she was grabbed by the hair and savagely beaten. In fear for his life and in order to protect his son, who was stricken with fever (his temperature had reached 104 degrees Fahrenheit), Kegui grabbed a knife. At the sight of the knife, Zhang Jian yelled, "He has a knife in his hand; kill him!" In desperation, Kegui slashed at the attackers with the knife, shouting "You won't let me live, I will die with you!" and injuring Zhang Jian and two of his men in the chaotic darkness. The court confirmed that two of the men were the members of a Public Security Joint Defense Force, while the other two intruders were not identified due to "security reasons." Had Kegui not defended himself with a knife, we would probably have not seen him alive again. Those gangsters, who knew no bottom line, would have beaten him to death.

Afterward, Kegui said to his mother, "I've got to run for my life; otherwise I will not have long to live if they send more people to come after me." Kegui dialed 110 for police. But more than three hours later, police hadn't come. Kegui then went into hiding at a classmate's residence and found a doctor in the village to treat his injuries, which were still bleeding. On April 29, Kegui turned himself in at the Hong Hua Fu Police Department in Yancheng City.

Around 6:00 a.m. on April 27, Ma Liancheng, the commissioner of the Public Security Bureau and chief of the Political and Legislative Committee, taunted me: "Your family produces a whole bunch of bums—Chen Guangcheng is the first one; you are the second. You not only ruined Chen Guangcheng, but also ruined your own family. It is not enough that you yourself committed a crime; you also implicated your son. After you left your house, something big happened." He paused, observing my facial expression. The first person who came to my mind was my grandson, who suffered from a fever. But he said, "Your son Chen Kegui injured Zhang Jian with two chopping knives. Nobody knows what became of Zhang." I asked, "Where did he injure him?" Ma said, "As the commissioner of the Public Security Bureau, I can tell you that he did that in your house." At that remark, I smiled. I said, "I know my son. I just know it; he

wouldn't hack at anyone he sees. The question was, what Zhang Jian was doing at midnight in my house?" I need to remind you, Zhang Jian came into my house in order to conduct an illegal search, beating, smashing, and looting. In the face of an unlawful attack, also in order to protect family and himself, Kegui's self-defense is completely justifiable.

It is said that during the trial, the court justified Zhang Jian and his men's intrusion on grounds of "looking for Zhang Jian's cell phone." In fact, Zhang Jian's cell phone was lost after he was injured by Kegui with his knife. And they would go so far as to reverse the time sequence!

You might remember some evidence in the Cheng Guangcheng case in 2006: the testimony made by Liu Changsheng, a fellow villager. According to the testimony, Liu witnessed Chen Guangjun, my and Chen Guangcheng's other brother, smashing a car in Dongshigu village.

However, at the time referenced by Liu, Chen Guangjun was working in Linyi, a city 37 miles from Dongshigu, and Liu was working in Zibo, a city 186 miles away. But the scene of the car smashing was in Dongshigu. And yet such ludicrous statements made by Liu were officially quoted in a solemn verdict. Zhang Changguo, the head of the Shuanghou county police precinct defended the verdict this way: "If it is quoted in the verdict, it must serve a purpose. As for the truth, who else would know as long as you and I keep it to ourselves?"

The testimonies used in the Chen Kegui case were from people who are interested parties as well as the intruders and perpetrators in this case. Their testimonies are all alike. They should not have legal effect. By contrast, against her will, Ren Zongju, Chen Kegui's mother, (who is illiterate) gave her testimony under coercion. She was told, "You've got to sign whenever you are asked to sign, or you will die here if you refuse. You don't have any human rights here, anyway." She was forced to use an inked thumbprint, just as it happened in that well-known story of Yang Bailao, a poor peasant who sold his only daughter by putting his thumbprint on the contract.

After Kegui fled, a motley crowd consisting of Public Security officers, party and government officials, and hired thugs entered my house for the third time. Kegui's mother was giving medicine to our grandson, whose fever was 104 degrees Fahrenheit. The intruders first knocked over the bowl containing medicine, spilling it all over. Then they dragged her by the hair from the bed and beat her. Kegui's mother screamed, "Help! They're killing me!" The mob continued the beating madly, saying "Don't you dare to call for help!" The neighbors heard both of the noises: her call for help and the mob's answer.

The mob continued the beating until they got tired. Kegui's mother pleaded with them to allow our grandson, sick with a fever, to see a doctor. After our grandson was treated, Kegui's mother was arrested, interrogated, and tortured before she was thrown in jail. She was forced to work a dozen hours in prison every day, laboring over needlepoint work. It is said that needlepoint work is to be exported for foreign exchange. If one cannot fulfill the daily quota, she will be penalized by standing in front of everyone. Sometimes one has to stand for six hours straight during the night.

On May 5, Ma Liancheng, the Public Security Bureau commissioner, notified me to answer a phone call from Chen Guangcheng. I was warned that I could report only good news and shouldn't talk too much. If I cooperated, my wife would be released on bail. "If you don't, we'll let her stay inside. You know, not just you and Chen Guangcheng are on the phone; many other are listening to your phone call, too!" I did what they asked. Soon Kegui's mother was released on bail.

In the verdict, there was a statement made by Kegui: Zhang Jian and his men came empty-handed. Obviously, his statement was given against his will, under huge pressure. The broken handles of picks on the scene were the best proof.

On April 27, Liu Fang, Kegui's wife, received a short message from her husband, asking to have a lawyer hired for his defense. On May 11, Liu Fang retained two defense attorneys: Ding Xikui, from Mo Shaoping Law Firm in Beijing, and Si Weijiang, from Dabang Law Firm in Shanghai. However, they were not allowed to access the case though they went to much trouble to help. The authorities claimed that Kegui had already applied for legal aid service, which obviously was arranged against his will.

Around 10:00 p.m. on Nov. 29, 2012, a friend called me saying that Kegui's case was to be on trial the next day. Initially I was suspicious of the news. I made a phone inquiry to Wang Haijun, whom authorities had appointed as Kegui's lawyer. Wang said, "I haven't received the notification of the court hearing. I am currently in Qingdao."

At 10:30 a.m. on Nov. 30, Wang Haijun called me saying, "Kegui's case will be tried at 2:00 p.m. this afternoon." Only three and half hours were left until the court hearing when I learned of the news.

Kegui's mother and I hurried to the court. Before we reached the entrance of the court, we were surrounded by plainclothes police officers. I told them that I came to attend the trial. The answer was "No entry; wait here." Negotiating didn't work out a solution so we were forced to stay in the cars of State Security Police. We were forbidden from being near the entrance until the court trial was over. We noticed that police officers were stationed at every road leading to the Yinan County courthouse and even miles away on roads leading to the county center. Passers-by were questioned, and vehicles were inspected. The local residents connected to the case were "taken good care of" by the police. Even the human rights activist, Hu Jia, who lives far away in Beijing, was restrained from leaving home until the end of the trial.

It is safe to say that Kegui's trial is one of unfairness and injustice; it is a mockery of laws and a violation of human rights. It exemplifies a regress of rule of law in China.

On April 18, 2013, it was near one year anniversary of Chen Guangcheng's escape. At 7:00 a.m., the Shuanghou county government held a joint meeting for all party members and members of Public Security and Joint Defense Force. This meeting charged Chen Guangcheng three offenses. One offense was that he filed complaints against 40 individuals at the U.S. Congress and they were placed on a black list. Second, he intended to go to Taiwan to support Taiwanese independence. Finally, he also planned to go to Tibet to instigate Tibetan independence. Consequently, they deployed counter-measures lest Cheng Guangcheng's influence grow.

On the afternoon of April 18, four staff members working for the dissident artist Ai Weiwei were taken for Japanese journalists and arrested when they tried to enter the Dongshigu village. Their car tires were pierced with a sharp knife.

Beginning on April 18, officials would throw rocks, bricks, and beer bottles at my house around 1:00 a.m. every night, damaging the tiles, doors, and windows. They also threw dead chickens and ducks because bird flu was at its peak. They also posted and passed along a large amount of pamphlets, which hurled abuse and insults at Cheng Guangcheng and called me a traitor and a troublemaker. They also threatened to break our legs and stone the whole family to death. The poplar tree we planted was pulled out twice, and they did the same to vegetable fields my 80-year-old mother toiled over, leaving them withered.

I had dialed 110 to report the harassment to police almost a dozen times, but the local police didn't take any action. Even worse, they just refused to answer my calls. On May 8, I posted my decision on Sina Weibo (China's version of Twitter): "Reporting to police ten times has come to nothing. I am going to Beijing seeking justice." That was how I embarked on the journey of appealing to the higher authorities and defending my rights. As a direct result of this post, I was assaulted on the road by an unidentified person who was driving a car without a plate on May 9; he also damaged my motor bike. Upon returning home, I tried to post the assault incident online, only to find that my account had been cancelled.

Some internet users joked: "If you tell me that throwing dead chickens and dead ducks are some petty crooks' doing, I believe it. But for the account cancellation, there must have been big crooks behind it."

The aim of this persecution, which has escalated to such frantic levels, is to retaliate against and warn Chen Guangcheng: don't speak too much; don't go to Taiwan.

On April 24, I received a phone call from Chen Kegui, who told me that he was positively diagnosed with appendicitis. The next day, it was time to visit the prison. The prison administration also confirmed Kegui's health problem. I immediately requested to have Kegui treated at a hospital outside the prison, but the request was not granted.

On April 29, Kegui's wife, Liu Fang, and I went to the prison again and submitted a written application for Kegui's release on medical parole or to seek treatment outside the prison. We were notified that he had already developed a suppurative appendicitis, [which meant that Kegui's appendix had perforations and pus could enter his abdominal cavity]. But the administration still rejected our request.

On May 2, the same application was submitted the third time to the Linyi Prison administration, and it was rejected again.

I would like to ask a question: during the time period between the positive diagnosis on April 24, to the occurrence of suppurative appendicitis on April 29, had he been given proper treatment? If the answer is yes, how did he have suppurative appendicitis?

I learned from my prison visit on Oct. 31 that he was forced to write a confession while he was sick. Wasn't that the act of exploitation of other people's vulnerable situations?

Because Kegui didn't receive proper treatment in a timely manner, he still hasn't completely recovered from his appendicitis. He constantly feels pains in the area of his appendix. At the same time, he is made to do long hours of manual labor in spite of his illness.

There was a dialogue between Chen Guangcheng and Zhang Jian, the Head of Shuanghou Township. Guangcheng said, "Just to persecute one individual, you have the audacity to spend 60 million Chinese yuan in tax payers' money!" Zhang Jian derisively said, "Sixty million? You only know that part of the money; there is more which is unknown to you." This is just a good evidence of the government's profligate use of tax payers' hard-earned money.

China always likes to trumpet itself as a country ruled by law. However, government officials at grass root levels repeatedly made it clear to me that the so-called rule-by-law means the Communist Party has unlimited means to sort you out!

In 2012, the Central Government promised that the persecution of Chen Guangcheng and his family by local officials would be investigated thoroughly and fundamental civil rights of Chen Guangcheng's family will be protected. However, this promise has not been fulfilled at this point. Even worse, the government has continued to attack, retaliate, and persecute Chen Guangcheng's family in his hometown in the form of imprisonment, surveillance, slandering, insulting, harassment, and beating.

If the principle of individual conduct is measured by a man who keeps his word, then a country should be held to the same standard much more so!

In a country self-claimed as a nation with rule of law, such appalling incidents in violation of human rights is utterly beyond comprehension.

I sincerely hope that the Council members will be able to side with the Chinese people, show your concerns and lend support for those individuals and families under persecution by a dictatorial regime.

Thank you.