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## **Chen: US pressure key as China shows ‘bad faith’**

Promises to Chen Guangcheng that he can live a normal life if he remains in China must be viewed with extreme caution, Amnesty International said as he and his family spent their first day reunited in hospital in Beijing surrounded by security personnel.

“The full story of what happened when he left the US Embassy has yet to emerge, but the fact remains that China made guarantees to American officials that Chen Guangcheng could live a normal life in China in safety,” said Catherine Baber, Amnesty International’s Asia-Pacific Deputy Director.

“Just as they were making such assurances the authorities detained his associates and are now targeting his supporters. This smacks of bad faith.”

The US- China Strategic and Economic Dialogue opens in Beijing on 3 May.

“The coming days are critical, but the wellbeing of Chen, his family and supporters demands long term scrutiny and international pressure,” said Baber.

“The Chinese government must honour its commitments to Chen and the US and other governments must continue to insist at the highest levels that it does so.”

The US State Department today confirmed that the Beijing authorities told Chen his wife and children would be returned to Shandong province if he remained under US diplomatic protection.

“This account is disturbing - the implications of a return to Shandong province cannot be overstated as this is where Chen and his family suffered violent abuse over many months. Reports that they are now afraid and would prefer to leave the country are understandable,” Baber added.

“US officials must use the Dialogue opportunity to insist the Chinese authorities allow Chen to leave China with his family if that remains their wish.

“We have received reports that authorities today surrounded the home of activist and Chen’s supporter, Zeng Jinyan,” Baber said. “Chen’s friend, He Peirong, has reportedly been detained in her home since helping him escape from illegal house arrest.”

“Part of living a "normal life" is exercising one's right to freedom of expression and association. We expect the authorities to stand by their commitment to the rule of law and to fully protect the human rights of all citizens. They must allow Chen and his family to speak and meet with whoever they wish, to travel and leave the country whenever they wish. “

“This is an unprecedented situation and we will be watching closely to see how it plays out in the weeks and months to come.”

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