



PETITION

RIGHTS RESPECTED! FREE CHEN GUANGCHENG

Minister of Justice of the People's Republic of China
WU Aiyang Buzhang
Sifabu
10 Chaoyangmen Nandajie
Chaoyangqu
Beijingshi 100020
People's Republic of China

Dear Minister,

We, the undersigned, are deeply concerned about Chen Guangcheng who was detained and initially sentenced to four years and three months in prison in December 2006 for “damaging public property and gathering people to block traffic”. We are also deeply concerned over the reliable reports that he was severely beaten by other prisoners on the orders of prison guards on 16 June 2007. Although Chen Guangcheng’s lawyers have submitted requests to prison, court and judicial officials that Chen Guangcheng be allowed to serve his sentence outside prison due to his blindness, they have so far gone unanswered.

We consider the conviction of Chen Guangcheng to be an attempt to prevent him from carrying out his peaceful and legitimate human rights activities, including his efforts to bring local officials to justice for conducting a campaign of forced abortions and sterilizations which affected thousands of local women. We call on you to secure his immediate and unconditional release. We urge you to initiate a full and impartial investigation into allegations that he has been subjected to torture and other ill-treatment in prison, with a view to bringing those responsible to justice.

We are also concerned about the ongoing police surveillance, arbitrary detention and harassment of Chen Guangcheng’s wife, Yuan Weijing, as a result of her attempts to secure justice for her husband. We request that you provide immediate guarantees for her safety and ensure that she can carry out her peaceful and legitimate activities without fears of arbitrary detention, harassment or other serious human rights violations

The ongoing imprisonment of Chen Guangcheng and harassment of Yuan Weijing runs counter to commitments made by numerous Chinese officials that human rights would improve in the run-up to the Olympic Games in Beijing. Such abuses also contravene fundamental principles of the Olympic Charter relating to the preservation of human dignity and respect for universal, fundamental, ethical principles. We urge your administration to address such abuses with a view to ensuring a positive human rights legacy for the Olympic Games in August 2008.

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