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China: Wife of Human Rights Activist beaten

Amnesty International calls on the Shangdong authorities to stop the continuing harassment of Yuan Weijing, the wife of imprisoned legal activist Chen Guangcheng, who has been under virtual house arrest since 2005.

Yuan Weijing was forcibly returned to her home by nine men as she was leaving to visit her grieving family following the death of her brother in law, Luo Kengren. She was punched and kicked by the men while being dragged back to her house.

“The continued virtual house arrest of Yuan Weijing is illegal. While national authorities are touting the new National Human Rights Action Plan, we see local authorities flagrantly violating the law in this case,” said Roseann Rife, Amnesty International’s Deputy Programme Director, Asia Pacific.

“Beating up the wife of a human rights activist as she attempts to reach her grieving family deserves wide condemnation.”

Yuan Weijing’s husband, legal activist Chen Guangcheng, 38, was sentenced to four-years-and-three-months’ imprisonment for “intentionally damaging property” and “gathering a crowd to block traffic.” Chen Guangcheng had been campaigning on the alleged forced abortions and sterilizations in pursuit of birth quotas that affected thousands of local women. Human Rights activists believe this was the real reason why he was put under house arrest alongside his wife in 2005 and imprisoned in 2006.

Yuan Weijing has never been charged or tried for a criminal offence. She has experienced several violent encounters with local authorities over the years, as they have prevented her from meeting journalists and lawyers. The couple’s children have been prevented from registering at school.