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**He Peirong and Jiang Tianyong –
Chinese Communist Repression
Against the Supporters of Chen Guangcheng**

Testimony of Reggie Littlejohn, President

Women's Rights Without Frontiers

May 15, 2012

**House Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights**

Honorable members of the Sub-Committee, ladies and gentlemen, I am grateful for this opportunity to testify here today, during a sensitive time in engaging the People's Republic of China (PRC) to free Chen Guangcheng and his family.

I have been asked to brief the Sub-Committee on the treatment of two prominent activists who are supporters of Chen: He Peirong, also known as Pearl, who was instrumental in Chen's escape, and Jiang Tianyong, a key member of Chen's legal team.

He Peirong (Pearl)

He Peirong, also known as Pearl, has played a key role in organizing support for Chen within China. When I testified about her on May 3, she had been detained for almost a week and I was very concerned that she might be tortured to learn the names of others in her network. The very day after the hearing, at which her case was strongly raised by Rep. Chris Smith, Pearl was released and was interviewed by the BBC.

Some say that quiet, back door diplomacy is the way to deal with the detention of Chinese human rights defenders. But we have found that high profile visibility is far more effective. Pearl herself seems to have endorsed this approach in her BBC interview. According to this interview, she was confined to a hotel room. The police were "polite," but persistent in their

effort to obtain information, which Pearl did not divulge. About her own safety, she said, “I was very concerned, but once the thing went public, I was no longer worried.”¹

I skyped with Pearl the day after her release, and again on this past Saturday. Pearl is grateful that she was treated so well in detention in Nanjing. This has not always been the case. I understand from a reliable source that she has encountered violence three times in Shandong:

- On Jan 10th, 2011, She drove to Chen’s village, where plain clothes guards smashed her car outside of Chen’s house.
- On May 30 2011, she went to Yinan county for Chen’s case and plainclothes guards kidnapped, robbed and beat her. They struck her face 30 to 40 times. She was subjected to a painful position for four hours while being driven in a car, and she was dumped on a road by thugs.
- On June 6 2011, she went to Yinan county for Chen’s case again. In the local official’s office she was kidnapped and robbed again. The plain clothes guards drove her for over four hours and dumped her in the middle of wheat field in Jiangsu. Two men kicked her into a field. They tried to stuff her socks into her mouth, tied her up in the field and touched her breast twice. A video at a highway toll station showed that the police in Yinan County were involved.

Despite the violence she has suffered, Pearl wants to remain in China for the protection of her friends. Pearl has asked me to make this statement for her at this hearing:

“I would like to thank everyone who fights for our freedom: activists, Congressmen and Congresswomen, as well as the U.S. Government, the State Department, Secretary Clinton, and the United States. I hope I will visit this great country one day, but now I just want to stay with my friends in China. What I want is for all my friends to be safe.”

Jiang Tianyong

Jiang Tianyong has taken up several sensitive legal matters and has long been a member of Chen’s legal team. For this, he has suffered violence on several occasions.

Most recently, according to media reports, Jiang Tianyong tried to visit Chen Guangcheng in the hospital, and for this he was beaten so severely in the head that he may have lost hearing in one ear. He and his family have also been monitored. Even after this beating, he bravely spoke out for Chen Kegui, Chen Guangcheng’s nephew, who has been accused of intent to murder – even

¹ “He Peirong Describes Chen’s Escape,” BBC 5/4/12 http://audioboo.fm/boos/785812-he-peirong-describes-chen-escape?utm_campaign=detailpage&utm_content=retweet&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter

though he was acting in self defense and no one died. Jiang stated, “the charge of ‘homicide with intent’ had been trumped up and that it should actually be ‘wounding with intent.’”²

I understand that Jiang has reached an agreement with officials that he will not try to visit Chen again, he will not meet with foreign media, and he will leave Beijing. He has now received medical treatment and is no longer being monitored.

This is not the first time that Jiang has suffered violence for his legal bravery. On November 10, 2009, Jiang Tianyong and I were fellow presenters, sitting at the same table, testifying before Congress on China’s brutal One Child Policy. Though our testimony was similar, the difference between us was profound. As an American, I could go home to my family and enjoy safety and peace. When Jiang left the hearing, he said to his fellow presenters, “I’m worried. If anything happens to me, please look after my wife and child.” I stood in awe of his courage – risking not only his own safety, but also the safety of those he loves most, to reveal the truth about the suffering of women and girls in China.

A few days after returning to China, as Jiang was leaving his apartment to take his young daughter to school, his fears materialized. According to reports, four cadres grabbed him and dragged him off to detention. Then they beat his wife. All this happened right in front of their seven-year-old daughter, as she screamed helplessly.

Despite this violence, Jiang has persisted in his bravery. In February 2011, Chen Guangcheng and his wife, Yuan Weijing, secretly recorded a video describing the harsh conditions of their house arrest. Following the video’s release, they were beaten senseless and were denied medical treatment. Chen’s legal team tried to gather to discuss ways to assist him but several were placed under house arrest, preventing them from attending this meeting. Lawyers who did attend the meeting, including Jiang Tianyong and Teng Biao, were later beaten and disappeared for two months or more. According to a media report, Jiang endured beatings, shouts, shackles, blindfolds, no sunlight. He said he was banged on the head so severely — typically with plastic bottles filled with water — that his memory began to slip. He couldn’t remember his Skype password or how the furniture was arranged in his bedroom back home.³

Although Pearl and Jiang appear safe for the moment, who knows whether the Chinese Communist Party will retaliate against them once Chen comes to the United States. Women’s

² Lawyers for Chen Kegui Face Threats, Taipei Times, 5/12/12
<http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/world/archives/2012/05/12/2003532645/1>

³ In the Chen Case, Collateral Damage, International Herald Tribune Rendevous, New York Times Blog, 5/7/12
<http://rendezvous.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/05/07/in-the-chen-case-collateral-damage/>

Rights Without Frontiers calls upon the United States Congress and the Department of State to raise the issue of the safety of Chen's supporters, who are heroes in their own right.

United States House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs

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Clause 2(g) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives and the Rules of the Committee require the disclosure of the following information. A copy of this form should be attached to your written testimony and will be made publicly available in electronic format, per House Rules.

1. Name:	2. Organization or organizations you are representing:		
<p>Reggie Littlejohn</p> <p>Womens Rights Without Borders</p>			
3. Date of Committee hearing:	May 15, 2012		
4. Have you received any Federal grants or contracts (including any subgrants and subcontracts) since October 1, 2008 related to the subject on which you have been invited to testify?	5. Have any of the organizations you are representing received any Federal grants or contracts (including any subgrants and subcontracts) since October 1, 2008 related to the subject on which you have been invited to testify?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
6. If you answered yes to either item 4 or 5, please list the source and amount of each grant or contract, and indicate whether the recipient of such grant was you or the organization(s) you are representing. You may list additional grants or contracts on additional sheets.			
7. Signature: <p>Reggie Littlejohn</p>			

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