

Testimony on China's One-Child Policy

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Most people know that China has a One-Child Policy. But do they stop to think about what happens to a woman when she violates that policy?

China's One-Child Policy causes more violence against women and girls than any other official policy on earth. This is not a political issue. It's a human rights issue and a women's rights issue. On April 22 of this year, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton condemned forced abortion and forced sterilization in China, saying that they are "absolutely unacceptable." Another pro-choice feminist has described forced abortion as "torture."ⁱ **It does not matter whether you are pro-choice or pro-life on this issue. No one supports forced abortion, because it is not a choice.**

When we say, "forced abortion," what do we mean? We mean women being kidnapped, screaming and crying out of their homes, strapped down to tables, and forced to have abortions, even up to the ninth month of pregnancy. The violence of these late-term procedures sometimes kills not only the fetuses, but also the women themselves.

This picture emerges clearly in the sixteen "Cases" described in a document secretly leaked out of China on August 25, 2009. Seven of these cases occurred in 2009. In two of the cases, the women died, along with their aborted fetuses. These Cases are documented in the first joint report of ChinaAid and Women's Rights Without Frontiers, entitled, "New Evidence Regarding China's One-Child Policy – Forced Abortion, Involuntary Sterilization, Infanticide and Coercive Family Planning."

Just as no one supports forced abortion, no one supports infanticide. And yet another document leaked out of China just last week discusses methods of infanticide, including the puncturing of the skulls and injecting alcohol into the brains of full term fetuses to kill them during labor. This document is a web-format discussion from a current website for Chinese gynecologists and obstetricians. It is contained in the second joint report from ChinaAid and Women's Rights Without Frontiers, entitled, "China: Best Practices – Infanticide; 'What if the infant is still alive after induced labor?'"

The Chinese Communist Party would have the world believe that it is relaxing its One-Child Policy. This is propaganda. To the contrary, the National Population and Family Planning Commission of China issued a statement on July 23 of this year that its One-Child Policy "will be strictly enforced as a means of controlling births for decades to come."ⁱⁱ

The Chinese Communist Party points out that they have created certain limited exceptions to the One-Child rule. For example, couples who are both only children can now have two children. In my view, these exceptions do not constitute improvement.

The problem with the One-Child Policy lies not in the number of children allowed. The problem lies with the coercive enforcement of the birth limit, whatever that limit might be.

There are at least six ways in which the One Child Policy causes violence against women and girls. These are documented and discussed in more detail in the third report I am presenting today, “The Consequences of Coercion: China’s One Child Policy and Violence Against Women and Girls.”

- 1) **Forced abortion** is traumatic to women.
 - a. Because of the traditional preference for boys, sex-selective abortion is common and most of the aborted fetuses are girls, a form of **“gendercide.”**
- 2) Because of this gendercide, there are than 37 million more men than women in China today. This gender imbalance is a major force driving **sexual trafficking** of women and girls in Asia.
- 3) China has the highest **female suicide rate** of any country in the world. It is the only nation in which more women than men kill themselves – approximately 500 women a day. I believe that this high suicide rate is likely related to coercive family planning.
- 4) Women who have violated the policy are often forcibly sterilized. **Forced sterilization** is a serious human rights abuse and can lead to life-long health complications.
- 5) Women are suffering the loss of their children. Recent evidence has emerged that Chinese **officials are stealing** “illegal” second babies for foreign adoption.

The only logically and morally consistent position for the pro-choice movement is to oppose forced abortion, because it is not a choice. I call upon Planned Parenthood and NARAL to speak up for reproductive choice for the women of China. And I call upon President Obama, as the leader of the free world, to challenge the Chinese Communist Party on the coercive implementation of its One Child Policy. As Speaker Nancy Pelosi stated at a recent event honoring the Dalai Lama, “If we do not stand for human rights in China, we lose the moral authority to stand for anything else.”

ⁱ Starr, Penny. “Pro-Choice Human Rights Activists Call Chinese Abortion Practices Torture.” CNSNews.com. [Online] Available <http://www.cnsnews.com/public/content/article.aspx?RsrcID=42064>, January 19, 2009.

ⁱⁱ “Shanghai Spreads Second-Child Message Amid Concern Over Aging Population.” Website for the National Population and Family Planning Commission of China. [Online] Available <http://www.npfpc.gov.cn/en/activities/detail.aspx?articleid=090727083954062717>, July 23, 2009