

Forced Abortion at Eight Months in Fujian

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The case is the first to come to light since another late-term abortion sparked uproar over China's family planning policies.



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A woman walks with her grandson past a propaganda pavilion for family planning services and the one-child policy in Qingdao, Oct. 12, 2011.

As the Shaanxi victims of a late-term forced abortion remained in exile from their hometown, the husband of a woman in the southeastern province of Fujian said on Wednesday that she was forced to abort her baby at nearly eight months by local officials in April.

Wu Liangjie said his wife Pan Chunyan was taken away from her shop on April 2 by local officials in Daji township in Fujian's Xianyou county and locked up in a government building, where she was forced to put her fingerprint on a document without knowing what it was.

"Everyone calls it the poison injection," Wu said. "They gave it to her on April 6, and in the early hours of April 8, the baby was stillborn."

"Its skin was very dark all over."

Wu said the family were denied access to Pan during the procedure.

"We were all shut outside, and they wouldn't let us in to see her," Wu said. "Her mother wanted to go and visit her, but they wouldn't let her, and she got beaten."

"One of my cousins tried to film this on his cell phone but he was beaten up too, and his cell phone was snatched away."

Wu said the baby would have been the couple's third, exceeding the birth quota of two children to rural couples whose firstborn is a girl.

He said the family had already paid fines of 20,000 yuan (U.S. \$3,150), and had promised to pay a further 55,000 yuan (U.S. \$8,650) which was demanded by family planning officials at the time.

An official who answered the phone at the Daji township government, which oversees the couple's home village of Dongjin in Fujian's Xianyou county, said he was unaware of the incident.

"I don't know about this," the official said, when asked to confirm if Pan's abortion had taken place.

Asked if abortions of eight-month fetuses were safe, the official replied, "It would be better to consider options once the baby was born."

Feng Jianmei

Activists and social commentators say late-term forced abortions are common across China, as family planning officials struggle to stay within draconian birth quotas, or risk huge fines themselves.

Last week, Chinese officials apologized to Feng Jianmei, 27, after she was forced to abort her seven-month-old fetus and gruesome photographs of her dead baby were circulated online.

Officials in her home city of Ankang in Shaanxi province said the family planning officials in Zhenping county, where the abortion took place, would be punished.

Feng and her husband Deng Jiyuan have been branded "traitors" by local officials, after they gave interviews about the forced abortion to foreign news organizations.

Calls to Deng's cell phone went unanswered on Tuesday and Wednesday and Feng told the *Wall Street Journal* she was being held against her will in a hospital.

Deng's sister Deng Jicai said she was currently in the hospital alongside Feng, but was reluctant to speak for long.

"Right now I can't get in touch with my brother," she said. "We both read the reports about the punishments, and we are not happy about them."

She confirmed reports that local officials had organized a demonstration outside Deng and Feng's home.

Official media said local authorities would hand out demerits to some officials and remove others from their posts, after an investigation upheld Feng's version of events.

"Feng Jianmei ... was forced to terminate her pregnancy over seven months in a hospital in Zhenping county on June 2," the official Xinhua news agency reported. "That violated her rights late in her pregnancy," it quoted the Ankang government as saying.

"The government said it has decided to subject Yu Yanmei, deputy county magistrate of Zhenping in charging of family planning, to administrative demerits," it said.

It said Jiang Nenghai, head of the family planning bureau of Zhenping county, had been removed from his post.

"Some other officials of the township, county government and the county hospital that aborted Feng's pregnancy, were also punished," the report said, without elaborating.

Reported by Hai Nan for RFA's Cantonese service and by Tang Qiwei for the Mandarin service. Translated and written in English by Luissetta Mudie.

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