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China dissident's brother says home attacked nightly with dead poultry, bottles

By Terril Yue Jones

BEIJING (Reuters) - Security personnel in eastern China are carrying out a nightly harassment campaign against the brother of blind rights activist Chen Guangcheng, the two said on Tuesday, throwing rocks, bottles and dead poultry at his house for 12 nights in a row.



Chen Guangfu, eldest brother of blind Chinese activist Chen Guangcheng, stands in his brother's room at their family home in the village of Dongshigu in Shandong Province, located around 600 km (373 miles) southeast of Beijing in this June 9, 2012 file picture.  
REUTERS/David Gray/Files

The attacks on the village home of Chen Guangfu continued early on Tuesday, he said. Two cars parked outside his house in Shandong province, shining their headlights through the windows and again security personnel threw rocks and beer bottles at the house and into the yard, he said.

"This is a country of hoodlums, not a country of law," Chen Guangcheng said of China from New York, where he is studying law at New York University.

"If you have principles, if you do what is right, why are you afraid of people?" he said. "Why do these kinds of things in the middle of the night? What kind of person does this? Only thieves and the narrow-minded, spreading unchecked. But that's how the Communist Party is now."

Chen Guangcheng made world headlines last year when he escaped house arrest and spent 20 hours on the run alone before meeting up with supporters who helped get him to Beijing where he was given refuge at the U.S. Embassy.

His escape caused a diplomatic tussle with the United States at a time when then-U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was visiting Beijing. He was then allowed permission to go to the United States to study.

In Washington, State Department deputy spokesman Patrick Ventrell said U.S. diplomats had repeatedly raised concerns about the treatment of Chen's family publicly and in private meetings with Chinese authorities.

"We urge the Chinese authorities to stop harassment of his family and to treat them fairly and with dignity," he said.

Chen Guangfu, 56, said the attacks started on April 18, the same day his brother had been put on a village Communist Party blacklist for his plans to visit Taiwan and, the party said, Tibet.

"They said he's planning to go to Taiwan to work on Taiwan independence, and to go to Tibet to support Tibet independence," Chen said.

China claims self-ruled Taiwan as its own and insists on eventual unification, by force if necessary. Chen Guangcheng has not said he would try to visit restive Tibet, which China has ruled with an iron hand since 1950.

Chen, who campaigned for citizens' rights including against forced sterilisations in China and who received a human rights award in the United States in January, has accepted an invitation to visit Taiwan in June.

Reached in at his home in Dongshigu village, Chen Guangfu said the security personnel arrived just after 2 a.m. on Tuesday, around the same time they had been arriving since April 18.

"They don't speak, they just do this," he said. "They throw things, put up little posters, they uproot my trees, pull out the vegetables my mother has been growing - these kinds of things to try to scare us."

Police did not answer calls made from his phone, he said, and had refused to investigate the attacks.

(Additional reporting by Paul Eckert in Washington.; Editing by Nick Macfie and Christopher Wilson)