

An Abrupt End to Violent Demolition?



In January 2011 China's State Council passed in principle a draft regulation that seeks to do away with the widespread practice of forced home demolition to make room for development projects. Forced demolition, or *qiang chai* (强拆), and its social fallout has been one of the most pernicious issues to haunt China over the past decade, as local government leaders across the country have recklessly seized land and destroyed property in a race to fuel local economic development, and to personally enrich themselves. While state media hailed the new draft regulation as a clear victory in holding the practice of forced demolition at bay, many experts said it would do little — and might even do more harm — without deeper legal and political reforms. We have [a round-up of the debate at CMP here](#). In this cartoon, printed in the English-language *China Daily* on January 28 and posted to artist Will Luo's (罗杰) QQ blog, a hulking bulldozer (labeled “violent demolition”) sent to demolish the home of an angry citizen, who shouts in defiance from his rooftop, is held back by a huge iron ball and chain labeled “new law on demolition and eviction.” The caption reads hopefully — remember, *China Daily* is published by the State Council Information Office — “The promulgation of the new law on demolition and eviction will prove a definite check on instances of violent demolition and eviction.”