



Juan Antonio Samaranch,
Chair of the International Olympic Committee Coordination Commission
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Switzerland

Cc. Thomas Bach, President, International Olympic Committee
Christophe Dubi Executive Director of the Olympic Games
Katia Mascagni, Head of Relations with International Organisations, Public Affairs and Advocacy
Mark Adams, IOC Communications Director

16 December 2020

Dear Mr Samaranch,

On 6 October 2020, we, a Tibetan, a Uyghur, a Hongkonger, a Chinese rights activist, and a Tibetan freedom campaigner representing over 100 rights organisations, met with you and a number of your colleagues to talk to you about what the International Olympic Committee (IOC) will do to stand up for human rights given the Beijing 2022 Winter Games are being hosted by one of the world's worst human rights abusers.

Responding to our concerns during that meeting, you and your colleagues agreed to share with us the human rights assurances,¹ that were given by Beijing ahead of the decision to award them the 2022 Games; we have yet to receive these and urge that they are immediately shared with us, as agreed, to enable us to understand the benchmarks being used by the IOC to assess Beijing's "progress".

We further note that this weekend you presented a report² on the latest progress being made for the implementation of the Beijing 2022 Games. We kindly request a copy of this report to aid our own assessment in regard to how Beijing is adhering to international human rights and labour standards.³

Further to these requests, we are writing regarding the news that the IOC has imposed sanctions on Belarussian officials⁴ linked to the beating, torture, and arrest of individuals participating in peaceful protest; **sanctions we fully commend and support.**

¹A letter from the IOC to Tibet Network in July 2015 stated: "During the evaluation process of the Candidate Cities for the 2022 Olympic Winter Games, the Evaluation Commission considered statements and opinions, [...] regards to Beijing 2022, assurances were provided concerning the following matters: human rights, the right to demonstrate, media freedom to report on the Games with no restrictions on the Internet, labour rights" - <http://bit.ly/2LI59hX>

²<https://www.olympic.org/news/olympic-highlights-14-12-2020>

³IOC letter July 2015

⁴IOC bans Belarus president Lukashenko from Games <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-olympics-ioc-idUSKBN28H2F>

Yet, for decades we have brought evidence to the IOC about the severe repression, the beatings, torture, and even death of our people at the hands of the Chinese authorities; some linked directly to peaceful protests related to the hosting of the Olympic Games.⁵ But the IOC has failed to act on these reports and has instead turned a blind eye to the widespread and systematic human rights violations being committed by the Chinese authorities.

During our meeting, you said, “no one is left behind for any reason: political, race, whatever, you name it.” But this is simply not true and your words appear to be part of the age-old rhetoric that the Committee’s hands are tied when it comes to human rights and China. The reality is that millions of Tibetans, Uyghurs, Southern Mongolians, Hongkongers, Taiwanese, and Chinese people, some of whom are athletes,⁶ are left behind by the IOC and we want to know why?

The IOC must hold all governments across the world to these same standards as a necessary approach to meet the IOC’s commitments to the Olympic Charter and adhere to corporate responsibility to protect human rights as elaborated in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, particularly given its Permanent Observer Status at the United Nations.

History has shown us that the IOC has made an active decision to continue with the charade of political neutrality to justify its inaction towards China’s human rights violations. This willful ignorance is shameful and fails to value the personal experiences of all of us struggling under this repressive regime.

We believe the application of the IOC’s charter has the potential to play a positive role in preventing and mitigating human rights abuses but that the Olympic spirit and the reputation of the Olympic Games will only suffer further damage if it continues to ignore this crisis and selectively apply human rights criteria of its own choosing.

Sincerely,

Zumretay Arkin
World Uyghur Congress

Dorjee Tseten
Students for a Free Tibet

Frances Hui
We The Hongkongers

Teng Biao
China Against the Death Penalty

Mandie McKeown
International Tibet Network

NOTE: The documents we have asked for should be shared with us via mandie@tibetnetwork.org - we wait for them patiently and hope they will be provided as soon as possible.

⁵ Beijing 2022: Another Gold for Human Rights Abuse? <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hKcRiyHyrY7vc-8x8yhrmmViraf5hEGe/>

⁶ <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/nba-08122020132516.html>