

A joint letter has been sent today to members of the International Olympics Committee calling on them to reject Beijing's bid to host the 2022 Winter Olympics. The letter is signed by the president of the World Uyghur Congress, the director of the Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, the president of Initiatives for China and a former Tibetan political prisoner, jailed and tortured for actions related to the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008.

The IOC will announce the host city for the 2022 Olympics in Kuala Lumpur, next Friday, 31 July.

Joint Open Letter to International Olympic Committee regarding Beijing's bid for the Winter Olympics 2022

23 July 2015

As Tibetans, Uyghurs, Southern Mongolians and Han Chinese we join together to urge you, Members of the International Olympic Committee, not to award another Olympic Games to China.

All of the people we represent have suffered as a result of the Chinese government's contempt for human rights. We hope that you are aware by now that the 2008 Beijing Games did nothing to alleviate human rights abuses in China or enhance freedom. In fact the situation now in 2015 is far worse than when those Games were awarded in 2001.

In the past 12 months alone the Chinese government has unleashed a harsh crackdown on human rights defenders in China itself, most recently arresting hundreds of human rights lawyers [1]; in East Turkestan (Ch: Xinjiang), where the majority population of Uyghurs practice Islam, there has been a ban on participation in many "religious activities" during Ramadan [2]; in Tibet the response to a surge of resistance has been brutal and ruthless, with reports of armed police attacking and beating peaceful protesters and seriously injuring many more [3]; and in Southern Mongolia China continues to force nomadic people off their ancestral grazing lands [4].

These are just selected examples of the repressive policies of China's government. With all of this information in mind, the IOC must not make the same mistake by hoping that an Olympic Games may help improve human rights in China and insulate the Olympic movement from controversy. The reality is that the 2008 Beijing Olympics left a trail of human rights abuses

directly linked to the Games [5].

Until the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party are prepared to reform and recognize the inherent rights of all people, they should not be awarded the honour of another Olympics. The IOC must recognise that the Olympic spirit and the reputation of the Olympic Games will suffer further damage if the worsening human rights crisis in China is simply ignored.

There is no excuse for making this mistake because we have been here before. This time it is imperative that the IOC stands on the right side of history, and gives hope to all those - including Tibetans, Uyghurs, Southern Mongolians, and Han Chinese - who continue to bravely defend human rights and principles in an extremely dangerous and hostile climate.

Our collective message to all International Olympic Committee members is that for hundreds of millions of people inside China's borders, the Games returning to Beijing will be a green light for the government's ongoing abuse of their rights and denial of their hopes for freedom. We urge members of the IOC to reject China's bid.

Signed

Golog Jigme

Filming for Tibet འཕྲིན་ལྷན་ཁག་གི་སྐོར་

Rebiya Kadeer

World Uyghur Congress دۇنيادىكى ئۇيغۇر كېڭەشچىسى

Enghebatu Togochoq,

Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center

Yang Jianli

Initiatives for China 中国倡议

Golog Jigme is a Tibetan monk, activist and former political prisoner. He was arrested and tortured in 2008 after having made a film, Leaving Fear Behind, interviewing Tibetans in Tibet about their views on China's rule and the 2008 Beijing Olympics. He escaped from prison in 2012 and after 20 months on the run, crossed the border into India in May 2014. He now lives in Switzerland.

www.filmingfortibet.org (for biography, see www.freetibet.org/golog-jigme)

Ms. Rebiya Kadeeris the leader of the Uyghur Democracy Movement and President of the World Uyghur Congress. An activist and businesswoman, she was imprisoned from 2000 - 2005 for her relentless political and human rights activism and now lives in exile in the United States. She's been awarded the Rafto Prize for Human Rights and in 2012 was included in the list of '500 Most Influential Muslims'.

<http://www.uyghurcongress.org/>

Mr. Enghebatu Togochoq is the Director of the Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center (SMHRIC), a New York based human rights organization dedicated to protection and promotion of the Mongolian people in Southern Mongolia.

<http://www.smhric.org/>

Mr. Yang Jianli is a leader of China's democracy movement and President of Initiatives for China. He has been involved in the pro-democracy movement in China since the 1980s and was forced to flee China in 1989 after the Tiananmen Square massacre. He spent 5 years in a Chinese prison between 2002 and 2007 after travelling to China on a friend's passport to investigate labour unrest. <http://www.initiativesforchina.org/>

Notes:

China, "Black Friday for Human Rights Defenders", 13 July 2015: <http://www.initiativesforchina.org/?p=1979>

U.N. official calls China's crackdown on Uighurs 'disturbing', 12 March 2015: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/12/us-china-un-xinjiang-idUSKBN0M723520150312>

Free Tibet, <http://freetibet.org/about/tibets-resistance>

Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, Protests spread in Southern Mongolia, many arrested http://www.smhric.org/news_572.htm

Human Rights Watch, China: Olympics Harm Key Human Rights, August 2008: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2008/08/06/china-olympics-harm-key-human-rights>