

Sports and Rights Alliance

PRESS RELEASE

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China: 2022 Olympics a test for Human Rights

Sport and Rights Alliance Calls on Olympic Officials to Ensure Protections

(Berlin, July 31, 2015) –The International Olympic Committee (IOC) should ensure that the 2022 Winter Olympics do not cause or exacerbate human rights abuses in China, the Sport and Rights Alliance said today after the capital, Beijing, won its bid to host the event/games.

Beijing beat a rival bid from the Kazakh city of Almaty after the Norwegian capital, Oslo, dropped out earlier in the race. The announcement was made at the IOC's 128th session in Kuala Lumpur.

The Sport and Rights Alliance is a coalition including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the International Trade Union Confederation, FIFPro – World Players' Union, Football Supporters Europe, Terre des Hommes, and Transparency International Germany. The Alliance seeks to ensure that host countries of mega-sporting events respect human rights, child rights and labour rights, the environment, and anti-corruption requirements at all stages of the process – from bidding through construction and preparations to host events as well as during events themselves.

CHINA

The decision comes at a particularly worrying time for human rights in China. More than two hundred human rights lawyers and activists have been rounded up in the last few weeks, as the authorities launched an unprecedented crackdown on freedom of expression. Some of those detained face up to 15 years in prison.

When Beijing hosted the 2008 Olympics, the authorities forcibly evicted many people from their homes, censored the Internet, banned protests, and cracked down on dissidents. Migrant workers building venues and infrastructure for the event were exploited, forced to work in dangerous conditions and denied access to health services.

Eduard Nazarski, director of Amnesty International Netherlands, a member of the SRA, said:

"In view of the human rights violations that were committed as a result of the Olympics in 2008, safeguards must be put in place to prevent a repeat. If anything the risks could be greater this time around, with the recent crackdown on human rights lawyers setting a dangerous precedent of things to come as 2022 gets nearer"

China ranks 100 (36 points out of 100) in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) of Transparency International

“With serious corruption concerns in China, a strong compliance system and transparency are needed to limit the costs and prevent criminal acts.” says Sylvia Schenk from Transparency International Germany.

IOC

Last year the IOC introduced new standards, as a result of the “Agenda 2020,” for the Olympic Games, which include human rights – specifically on discrimination - labour rights and anti-corruption measures.

“Ensuring transparency and respect for human rights from bidding to hosting of the Olympics, will be the key to how seriously the IOC takes its responsibility. How it handles the very serious human rights concerns in China will be a true test ,” said Eduard Nazarski

In the run-up to today’s decision on the 2022 Winter Games, the SRA called on the IOC to require in all legal documents pertaining to the hosting of the games that Host Cities uphold human rights throughout all stages of the hosting process and to develop, together with the Host City, a ‘human rights risks and mitigation’ plan for the event.

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