



ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY, CHAIRMAN
REPRESENTATIVE JAMES P. MCGOVERN, COCHAIRMAN

January 12, 2022

Thomas Bach
President
International Olympic Committee
Maison Olympique
1007 Lausanne, Switzerland

Dear President Bach:

We write to request further information on contracts for the production of uniforms that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has entered into with Anta Sports and Hengyuanxiang Group (HYX Group). We are particularly concerned about Anta's and HYX Group's continued use of cotton produced in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR).

The U.S. Congress and Administration strongly oppose forced labor. In December 2021, President Biden signed the *Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act* (Public Law 117-78) into law, creating a "rebuttable presumption" that goods sourced in the XUAR are made with forced labor and are thus prohibited from entering the United States.

Cotton produced in the XUAR is synonymous with forced labor and the systematic repression that takes place there. The Chinese Communist Party and government have created a system of mass surveillance and internment, forbidden the observance of key tenets of Islam and otherwise restricted individuals' ability to peacefully practice their religion, forcibly sterilized women and forced them to undergo abortions, and separated children from their families. Forced labor plays an integral role in the genocide taking place against Uyghurs and other predominantly Muslim ethnic groups in the region. Furthermore, forced labor was an important factor in the crimes against humanity determination by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and a factor in the crimes against humanity determination by the U.S. State Department which happened alongside a determination that genocide is taking place in the XUAR.

Chinese sportswear company Anta Sports continues to use cotton produced in the XUAR despite such concerns. A March 2021 South China Morning Post article reported that Anta is the "official sportswear uniform supplier" of the IOC through the end of 2022. Anta will supply the IOC with apparel, shoes, and accessories. In March 2021, Anta reportedly quit the social compliance group Better Cotton Initiative (BCI), and further voiced its support for continued use of cotton produced in the XUAR.

Similarly, HYX Group advertises its use of cotton produced in the XUAR. In an April 2021 article, Axios found that the IOC contracted HYX Group to supply the uniforms of IOC members and staff for the 2022 Olympic Games. Despite the ongoing genocide in the XUAR and its link to the use of forced labor (including in cotton production), HYX Group has a factory in the XUAR and openly advertises products that contain cotton produced in the XUAR. In response to inquiries from Axios, the IOC stated that HYX Group gave a “certificate of origin” that indicated the cotton used in the IOC uniforms did not originate in China. According to Axios, the IOC did not provide a copy of the certificate upon request.

Because Anta and HYX Group both continue to use cotton produced in the XUAR, there is a worrisome possibility that IOC personnel or others attending the 2022 Olympic Games will be wearing clothing contaminated by forced labor. In light of these forced labor concerns, we request that the IOC take the following actions:

- 1) Make public a copy of the “certificate of origin” given to the IOC by HYX Group that reportedly confirmed that no forced labor was used in the production of HYX Group products. Social compliance organizations and Canadian, U.K, and U.S. government agencies have warned against relying on audits in the XUAR. What assurances, if any, did the IOC receive that the certificate provided by HYX Group was reliable?
- 2) Explain publicly the assurances Anta Sports gave the IOC that the products Anta Sports supplied to the IOC were not produced in whole or in part by forced labor. Make any such assurances publicly accessible, and state why the IOC believed such assurances were reliable in a context where social compliance organizations and government agencies have warned against relying on audits.

As a starting point to fulfilling its commitment to uphold and respect human rights, and in line with the preservation of human dignity enshrined in the Olympic Charter, the IOC must uphold and respect the human rights of those who made the uniforms on their backs.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Senator Jeffrey A. Merkley
Chairman



Representative James P. McGovern
Co-Chairman



Representative Christopher H. Smith
Commissioner