



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

November 24, 2021

Thomas Bach
President
International Olympic Committee
Château de Vidy
Case postale 356
1001 Lausanne, Switzerland

Dear President Bach:

We are writing about the case of Peng Shuai.

On July 23, 2021, we wrote to you to ask that you use the power of your office to work for improvements in human rights in China, which will host the XXIV Olympic Winter Games in February 2022, in light of the genocide and crimes against humanity that the Chinese government is perpetrating.

The response we received from the International Olympic Committee was not signed by you but by a subordinate. The letter gave the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) rationale for why it could not intervene on behalf of human rights in the host country.

On November 21, 2021, you conducted a video call with Peng Shuai, the Chinese tennis player and three-time Olympian who had disappeared from public view following an accusation of sexual assault she made on social media against a former high-ranking Chinese official. Peng's social media post was immediately taken down and coverage of her case, including by international media outlets, was censored by the Chinese government.

Your video call with Peng shows that you can in fact use the power of your office to weigh in on a human rights concern inside China. It further shows that you, as IOC President, personally can cooperate with Chinese authorities to address a human rights concern. Therefore, we once again reiterate the request that you use the IOC's substantial leverage to demand that the Chinese government improve human rights prior to the start of the XXIV Olympic Winter Games.

While we are relieved that your November 21 video call showed that Peng was alive, it failed to address many of the continuing concerns about her situation. We do not know whether she has freedom of movement or speech, or whether she is in some form of enforced home detention. We do not know the state of her mental or physical health following her accusation of sexual


assault, much less whether authorities are investigating the subject of her allegation. We do not have an explanation why Chinese authorities continue to censor coverage of her case.

With these concerns, we respectfully make two requests:

- That you schedule a video call with us as soon as possible so we can hear from you directly about whether you will use the power of your office to address human rights concerns in China in the lead-up to the Beijing Winter Olympic Games; and
- That you arrange, using your demonstrated connection with relevant Chinese interlocutors, a video call between Peng Shuai and a small set of journalists from independent international media outlets in order to provide Peng an opportunity, should she choose of her own free will, to speak out over the censorship levied against her and her story by Chinese authorities.

Thank you in advance for addressing our concerns. Please contact the Commission's staff at the earliest convenience to schedule our video call.

Sincerely,



Senator Jeffrey A. Merkley
Chairman



Representative James P. McGovern
Co-Chairman