



ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
SENATOR MARCO RUBIO, CHAIRMAN
REPRESENTATIVE CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, COCHAIRMAN

October 10, 2018

Thomas Bach
President
International Olympic Committee
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VIA Fax: +41 21 621 62 16 (Lausanne)

Dear President Bach:

We write to respectfully ask the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to review and ultimately reassign the location of the 2022 Winter Olympics given credible reporting of the mass, arbitrary internment of one million or more Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic minorities in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) and other ongoing human rights abuses by the Chinese government.

Before the 2022 Olympic Games were awarded to Beijing, the Chinese government pledged to the IOC Evaluation Commission that it would respect the Olympic Charter and the Host City Contract, which require host cities to "prohibit any form of discrimination" based on religion and ethnicity, and to "protect and respect human rights and ensure any violation of human rights is remedied in a manner consistent with international agreements, laws and regulations applicable in the Host Country and in a manner consistent with all internationally-recognized human rights standards and principles." China's commitments to the IOC Evaluation Commission were questionable at the time given that the 2008 Beijing Summer Games were a catalyst for a surge in the arrest, detention, and harassment of government critics, as well as increased press freedom violations and political repression. Since the 2015 announcement awarding Beijing the 2022 Games, however, developments inside China are such that any Olympics that it hosts would be severely tainted by gross violations of universally recognized human rights.

In particular, the ongoing detention of over one million mostly Uyghur Muslims in "political reeducation" camps is the largest mass internment of an ethnic minority population since World War II. United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet called the accumulating evidence "deeply disturbing" and urged the Chinese government to allow UN monitors access to the XUAR. At a July 2018 Congressional hearing that we held on the situation in the XUAR, Ambassador Kellie Currie, U.S. Representative to the

Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, characterized the scope of the campaign against Uyghur Muslims as “truly breathtaking” and described how “over the past year, hundreds of thousands of law-abiding Uighur citizens of China—men, women and even children—have disappeared into state custody....” Ambassador Currie’s testimony also detailed how the Chinese government has sought to transform religion and ethnicity under the guise of fighting “terrorism,” and “religious extremism”:

[A]uthorities now prohibit “abnormal” beards and the wearing of veils in public, and classify refusal to watch state television, refusal to wear shorts, abstention from alcohol and tobacco, refusal to eat pork, fasting during the holy month of Ramadan, or practicing traditional funeral rituals, as potential signs that individuals harbor extreme religious views. Chinese authorities have banned parents from giving their children a number of traditional Islamic names, including “Muhammad,” “Islam,” “Fatima,” and “Aisha,” and have reportedly required children under age 16 who have Islamic names to change them.... Failing to comply with these restrictions, or activities such as communicating with relatives abroad and studying in foreign countries, has reportedly led to the detention of a large number of Uighurs and other Muslims, including families and children.

The continued human rights violations by the Chinese government requires a global response, including from the IOC. If the IOC remains committed to the prospect of a Beijing 2022 Winter Games, then we urge you to coordinate with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and seek from Chinese authorities immediate and unfettered access to the XUAR and any “political reeducation” camps for UN monitors, journalists, and international experts; the release of over a million Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities, and the permanent closure of all the “reeducation” camps.

We recognize the enormous nature of our request, but the international community cannot ignore what is happening in China at this moment. We will provide the IOC with information available to us concerning the current situation in the XUAR and offer to you whatever support that we can from the U.S. Congress for the decision to reassign the 2022 Olympic Games.

Sincerely,



Senator Marco Rubio
Chair



Representative Chris Smith
CoChair