

**Statement of U.S. Senator Byron Dorgan  
Co-Chairman, Congressional-Executive Commission on China**

**Hearing on "The Impact of the 2008 Olympic Games on  
Human Rights and the Rule of Law in China"**

**February 27, 2008**

Mr. Chairman, I want to commend you for holding this hearing today. It will explore what I believe has been a largely unexamined issue: whether the 2008 Olympics will in fact bring lasting benefits to the Chinese people by enhancing their human rights and accelerating rule of law reform.

The 2008 Olympics have focused the world's attention on China's support for repressive regimes, such as Sudan and Burma. And, this has been all for the good. Our government and the international community, however, have paid too little attention to the potential impact of the Games on the human rights of ordinary Chinese citizens.

China views the 2008 Olympics as not merely an international athletic event, but as recognition of its global economic, diplomatic and military power. It is a political event of great significance. It will confirm China's acceptance as a proud and prominent participant on the international stage. Whether Beijing will seize the opportunity presented by the Olympics to improve its record and recast its human rights legacy remains a vital open question.

Beijing lost its bid to host the 2000 Olympic Games, in part, because of the long shadow cast by the Chinese government's crackdown on the Tiananmen Square democracy movement in 1989.

Government negotiators worked to secure a better outcome for their second effort to host the games. They were successful, in part, by promising the International Olympic Committee that China would commit itself to significant reforms. These included allowing international reporters unfettered access across the country, and substantial improvements in air quality. Today, however, foreign journalists say they and their Chinese colleagues and interviewees are being harassed. And, the smog in Beijing remains as thick as ever.

The Games are now just six months away. The human rights situation on the ground is deeply troubling. Already, China has begun detaining citizens who have tied the Olympics to their peaceful criticism of the government's human rights record. Recently, China jailed Hu Jia, a courageous dissident who did nothing more than address a hearing on the Olympics. The hearing was quite similar to this one, and before the European Parliament. China insists that Mr. Hu's actions violated its laws on state secrets. As a result, he was dragged from his home by state police agents and now sits in jail. His wife and three-month old daughter remain in their apartment under house arrest. Their telephone and internet connections are cut.

Just last week, Yang Chunlin, an unemployed factory worker, went on trial for subversion in northeast China. Mr. Yang was arrested last year for reportedly helping nearby villagers seeking compensation for lost land. He had collected more than 10,000 signatures from local farmers. The signatures were for a letter which read, "We Want Human Rights, not the Olympics." Prosecutors have said that the letter stained China's international image, and that it amounted to subversion.

What if China had done the opposite? Instead of punishing Yang for his activism, what if the government had instead acknowledged his underlying message? Had that course been chosen, China would have improved its international image in one fell swoop. Instead, China further stained it.

Mr. Chairman, I would ask that the following list of political prisoners in China be entered into the hearing record. It is a short, representative list of individuals detained in recent years by the government for Olympics-related or other activities. The most important thing to notice about this list, Mr. Chairman, is that each of the people on it is in jail for having done nothing wrong. They did nothing wrong.

I am not only concerned by China's detention of citizen activists. I am also concerned about the treatment of large numbers of migrant workers who have been employed to manufacture Olympic merchandise and construct Olympic sites. These migrant workers, like millions of others across China, are required to work under the most hazardous conditions. They are routinely cheated out of their wages, and rarely have work-related medical insurance or labor contracts.

China has passed new and important legislation in the labor area, but implementation does not appear yet to be addressing the needs of those most in need of relief, those whom these laws were intended to protect. This Commission will remain focused on problems of implementation in the year to come.

The rights of workers, the right to speak freely, the right to challenge the government - all of these are enshrined in China's constitution. Yet, all of these are chronically violated. In such circumstances, it is crucial that we who can exercise these rights and defenses debate the reality in China, and question whether China is fulfilling its commitments on the Olympics.

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**Cases of Political Imprisonment in China**

1. **Hu Jia**: A prominent activist who has advocated on behalf of HIV/AIDS patients, environmental issues, and other rights defenders, Hu was detained by Chinese authorities on December 27, 2007 on suspicion of "inciting subversion of state power." Hu's detention may be linked to comments he made at a European Parliament hearing that were critical of China's hosting of the Olympics.

2. **Yang Chunlin**: As a land rights activist, Yang reportedly collected more than 10,000 signatures from farmers for a letter titled "We Want Human Rights, Not the Olympics," protesting the farmers' loss of land. Yang was detained in July 2007, and stood trial on charges of "inciting subversion of state power," on February 19.

3. **Wu Lihong**: An environmental activist from Jiangsu province, Wu spent more than a decade documenting pollution in Lake Tai, including providing environmental information to the government and the media. Shortly after Wu was detained in April 2007, Lake Tai experienced one of the worst blue-algae blooms, with millions of area residents without water for a few days. Wu was sentenced in August 2007 to three years in prison on the pretext of extortion and fraud.

4. **Guo Feixiong**: Guo is a prominent lawyer who was active in helping ordinary Chinese citizens defend their rights. In November 2007, Guo was sentenced to five years in prison for "illegal operation of a

business," for allegedly distributing a publication without the necessary government license. The publication, which concerned a political scandal, reportedly angered local officials.

**5. Ronggyal Adrag:** A Tibetan nomad, Adrag was detained in August 2007 after he walked onto the speakers' stage at a horse-racing festival and called for the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet, the release of the Panchen Lama identified by the Dalai Lama, and Tibetan independence. In October, a court sentenced him to eight years in prison on the charge of "inciting splittism."

**6. Adrug Lupoe:** A nephew of Ronggyal Adrag, Adrug Lupoe is a monk who was sentenced by the same court to 10 years' imprisonment on charges of splittism and espionage. He allegedly helped two other men attempt to send digital photos out of China of the local security crackdown.

**7. Nurmemet Yasin:** He is an ethnic Uighur writer from Xinjiang who wrote a short story in 2004 about a caged bird who chooses suicide over living without freedom. Chinese authorities viewed the story as an attack on government policy in Xinjiang, and sentenced him in 2005 to 10 years in prison for "inciting splittism."