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OLYMPIC WATCH

In July 2001 International Olympic Committee decided to give the privilege of hosting the Olympic Games to People's Republic of China (PRC), country in which human rights are constantly and permanently violated.

Furthermore, International Olympic Committee did not make any visible steps to execute the obligations performed by the Chinese government both to its own society and the international community.

„The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of man, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity.”¹

Olympic Charter, Fundamental Principles of Olympism, paragraph 2.

The Olympic movement is based not only on values of solidarity and rules of fair play but also on democracy and human rights. By limitation of freedom of expression,

Monitor Olimpijski (eng. *Olympic Watch*) was created to prove that the human rights standards as well as the Olympic idea cover all continents and countries in the world. Each of us can take a stand towards permanent abuses of the human rights in China. The Project does not call for boycott the Olympics. It proposes real actions to be undertaken as a part of the international movement for human rights in China. Each of us has an opportunity to take part in this historical event.

banning the freedom of assembly and religious persecutions, Chinese government does not follow the vision included in the contemporary Olympic Charter. Though much gross negligence, China was put under the obligation to decrease the censorship gradually, to guarantee the freedom of belief and the right to assembly.

In accordance to reports of *Amnesty International* (AI), *Human Rights Watch* (HRW) and other international organizations fighting for human rights, China is still far away from the fulfillment of the commitments made in 2001.

„Any form of discrimination with regard to a country or a person on grounds of race, religion, politics, gender or otherwise is incompatible with belonging to the Olympic Movement.”²

Olympic Charter, Fundamental Principles of Olympism, paragraph 5.

TWO DIAMETRICALLY DIFFERENT FACES OF CHINA

NEWS

6 MONTHS LEFT FOR CHINA TO FULFILL HUMAN RIGHTS PROMISES GIVEN 7 YEARS AGO

TWO DIAMETRICALLY DIFFERENT FACES OF CHINA

The increasing economic power and political influence of China raise no doubt. The activity of People's Republic of China (PRC) in transatlantic relations at the Washington - Brussels - Beijing axis is also undebatable. What is more, the permanent membership of China in the United Nations Security Council and strong representation in such organizations as World Trade Organization make this country be deemed as an important player in the international arena.

Despite a series of economic reforms and opening to a political dialog with other world powers, communism is still the foundation of the internal regime in China. Absolute power in the Middle Kingdom belongs to the Communist Party of China (CPC). Almost all members of parliament - National People's Congress, consisting of 2979 delegates - belong to the CPC.

Authoritarian rule does not let the opposition speak. Any acts of objection aimed at the CPC are detected and suppressed and their originators are subject to severe punishments and often put at risk of losing their lives. Groups facing the highest risk of repressions include mainly journalists, lawyers and human rights defenders, who not only defend themselves but, first of all, stand up for the rights of other citizens.

Censorship is another alarming phenomenon which concerns all mass media in China. It is a flagrant breach of the right to freedom of expression and right to information, universally recognized as fundamental rights of each human being. Far-reaching invigilation is often accompanied by arrests of dissidents without previously informing the subjects of charges brought against them, detentions without the right to fair trial, as well as inhuman treatment and use of torture.

„No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (...)"³

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 7.
(signed by China on 5.10.1998, but so far not ratified)

Use of death penalty is considered as one of the most serious human rights abuse occurring in China. According to official data announced by the Supreme Court in China, the number of executions in the first six months of 2007 decreased by 10% in comparison to the same period in 2006. However, organizations which monitor the situation of human rights are still estimating that about 7,500 executions are taking place in China every year.

China is undoubtedly a country with the highest number of death penalties carried out in the world. Applying death penalty is tantamount to violation of the right to life provided for in art. 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a right inherent to everyone - „Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."⁵

Furthermore, the reports by *International Campaign for Tibet or Human Rights in China* show that persecutions of national, ethnic and religious minorities are still intensifying.

„Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law."⁴

Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
art. 8.

Tibetan people face particularly severe repressions. Religious liberties come across particular restrictions and regulations introduced in 2007 trample on a centuries-old tradition of Buddhism, which is the most important determinant of Tibetan identity. Under

new provisions, nomination of the highest Buddhist monks shall be subject to decisions of the atheist authorities. The sole objective of the Dalai Lama living in exile is currently to guarantee to the Tibetan people autonomy which will preserve their cultural and religious identity.⁶

The representatives of minorities together with the oppositionists and human rights defenders are jeopardized by the Program „Reeducation through Labor". It is a punishment used towards persons who committed a misdemeanour not considered in the provisions of Criminal Code of the PRC. The reports by AI state that the „suspects" are placed in camps of reeducation through labor for the period from 1 to 3 years, during which they are exposed to degrading treatment, threats and torture.

All aforementioned violations of human rights, in which the Chinese authorities engage, are in conflict with the contents of the Constitution of PRC - art. 35 and 36, which read about freedom of speech, association and assembly as well as freedom of religion.⁷

近期新闻

NEWS

Alarming policy of National Olympic Committees

Olympic Committees in some countries are introducing provisions which forbid athletes to be vocal on political issues during the Olympic Games in Beijing. In the second week of February 2008, the British Olympic Association (BOA) forbade its athletes to take a stand on human rights during the Olympics adducing art. 51 of the Olympic Charter, which prohibits political demonstrations in any Olympic sites. Eventually, the BOA withdrew this decision after it had shaken the media and sport community almost all over the world. The moves made by Olympic Committees in Belgium and New Zealand, which allowed their athletes to speak their mind outside the stadiums, seem less restrictive. Piotr Nurowski, the Chairperson of the Polish Olympic Committee, assures that he will not forbid Polish athletes to take a stand on human rights violation. Similar position has been adopted by Committees in the USA, Australia, Canada and Finland.

Spielberg pulls out of the cooperation with the organizers of the Olympics in protest at China's policy towards Darfur

Steven Spielberg has withdrawn from counseling the organizers of the Olympics on preparation of Olympic events. In his statement, he expressed concerns about the passive stand of Chinese authorities on the humanitarian crisis in Darfur. China is known to be the biggest importer of oil from Sudan. According to the Amnesty International's sources, China is also the main exporter of weapons to Darfur, which leads solely to the escalation of the conflict. The decision of the director was supposedly influenced by the actress, Mia Farrow, who in her commentary to *Wall Street Journal* cautioned the director that if he was to take part in preparations to the Olympics, he risked being associated with the Nazi propagandist, Leni Riefenstahl.

6 MONTHS LEFT FOR CHINA TO FULFILL HUMAN RIGHTS PROMISES GIVEN 7 YEARS AGO

There is just half a year left till the beginning of the Olympics in Beijing. If the Chinese government and the International Olympic Committee aim at keeping their word, they have very little time to implement the obligations for the improvement of the human rights' situation in China.

We present chosen obligations below:

„Hosting the Olympic Games to promote the opening-up – in the preparation for the Games, we will be open in every aspect to the rest of the country and the whole world. We will draw on the successful experience of others and follow the advanced international standards and criteria“

Beijing Olympic Action Plan, 2002.

REINSTATEMENT OF THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION THROUGH ABOLISHMENT OF THE CENSORSHIP

All mass media are under the censorship. The control of Internet is used mostly for detection of the forms of the opposition against the authoritarian regime. Social portals (like *My space*), Internet browsers (like *Google*) and mail-boxes such as *Yahoo!* are being censored.

In relation to estimations of the *International Chinese Pen Centre*, 24 cyber-dissidents were arrested in 2004. It is implied that the actual number of detainees as a result of the carried out surveillance was and is still much bigger.

GUARANTEE OF THE MEDIA FREEDOM

The local journalists are put at risk of being persecuted and detained. The number of restrictions for foreign journalists wanting to travel during the Olympics to Xinjiang and Tibet – the autonomous regions of China, is still growing.

In 2006 Sun Weil, the spokesman of the Olympics organizers, assured that „every journalist will be able to travel freely inside the whole territory of China“.

LIMITING THE USE OF THE DEATH PENALTY

Another commitment of the representatives of the Chinese Government was supposed to lead to the reduction of the carried out executions. According to sources of AI, in January 2007 the Supreme Court in China decided to revise all death penalty sentences which have been already issued. However, Chinese authorities still deny the use of right to fair trial and still puts dissidents in the house

arrest. Moreover, there are provisions in force which allow the imprisonment without a legal judgment to last even for few years. Furthermore, the „Reeducation through Labor“ is still being used with the aim of „cleaning“ Beijing from inconvenient political opponents.

PROVIDING THE SAFETY AND LEGACY IN THE RUN UP TO THE OLYMPICS

Human Rights in China estimates that 174,065 accidents occurred during two first months of the 2003 during the process of building stadiums. It is claimed that 21.000 workers lost their lives in these accidents. Demonstrations against the organization of the Olympics in Beijing have been banned since 2001. All forms of protests, even the peaceful ones are forbidden under any condition. In fact, the highest amount of protests focuses on the problem of the mass resettlements connected with construction of Olympic facilities. Most of the evictions were forced

and the losses were not compensated to the aggrieved ones. It is definitely in contradiction to the Chinese government's commitments and IOC's declarations. As far as Reuters' sources are concerned, only in 2005 more than 300 thousands resettlements were carried out. According to *Human Rights in China* report from 2003, the number of people arrested for taking part in demonstrations has already reached 3 millions.

END OF REPRESSIONS TOWARDS RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC MINORITIES

Inhabitants of Tibet and practitioners of Falun Gong, the movement, which was forbidden by the Chinese government in 1999, are put at risk of very strong repressions. In China there are about 80 billions of Falun Gong practitioners. Most of them are supposed to be members of the Chinese

Communist Party. In accordance to the statistics from the rights of Falun Gong organizations, more than 100 thousands practitioners are kept in the „Reeducation Through Labor“ camps and about 500 are detained and sentenced to 18 years in prison.

Serious negligence in fulfillment of the promises given by the Chinese government and IOC may lead to missing a great opportunity given to China in 2001. If there will be no progress in the human rights field, China will lose the chance for creating a positive effigy in the world. The noble ideas of Olympism will lose their meaning which will have serious consequences for the international community. NGOs working world-wide are systematically monitoring the progress in human rights situation in China.

- **Human Rights Watch** runs the campaign: *Beijing 2008 – China's Olympic Human Rights challenge*, www.hrw.org
- **International Campaign for Tibet** acts under the banner: *Beijing 2008: Race for Tibet*, www.savetibet.org
- **Human Rights in China** takes actions under the motto: *Incorporating Responsibility 2008, An Olympics Campaign by Human Rights in China*. www.hrichina.org, www.ir2008.org

- **Amnesty International**
AI runs the specific campaign and prepares special reports analyzing the human rights situation in China in context of the preparation for the Olympics. The latest report published in August 2007 shows clearly that coming Olympics has not contributed to positive changes and what is more it became an additional source of repressions. www.amnesty.org, www.amnesty.org.pl

MONITOR OLIMPIJSKI – OLYMPIC WATCH

On 7 February 2008, on Chinese New Year, „Monitor Olimpijski” initiated its activities. The objectives of the project include observation of events accompanying the Olympics, evaluation of progresses or neglect in the field of human rights and involvement of as many people as possible in taking a stand in the face of violations of human rights in China.

The activities of „Monitor Olimpijski” encompass:

- monthly Information Bulletins;
- Reports dedicated to the situation of human rights in the PRC;
- Polish version of the book by Oystein Alme, *Silenced*, bringing up the issues of freedom of expression and media, also on the examples of censorship applied in China;⁹
- radio broadcasts dedicated to human rights.

„Monitor Olimpijski” is also planning to create a broad coalition of Polish non-governmental organizations dealing with human rights.

Olimpiada2008.info.pl
MONITOR OLIMPIJSKI 奥运观察

Within the project there is a web site which collects news regarding human rights in the light of the approaching Olympic Games. The web site also intends to promote individual actions and joined initiatives of human rights organizations, among others Amnesty International, Human Rights in China, Reporters Without Borders and Human Rights Watch.

VISIT THE BLOG OF MONITOR OLIMPIJSKI – [HTTP://OLIMPIADA2008.BLOX.PL](http://olimpiada2008.blox.pl)

We encourage everyone to participate in the discussion on the blog created especially for the project. Experts and coordinators of the project, but first of all people who would like to take a stand on violation of human rights in China will express themselves on the forum.

More information on Monitor Olimpijski can be found on www.Olimpiada2008.info.pl

1% ON ACTIVITIES FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN CHINA

China is going to spend billions of dollars on propaganda. We are counting on your 1% to show the reality.

Give 1% of your tax to the campaign on human rights accompanying the Olympics in Beijing. You can help by filling in appropriate fields of your tax declaration.

You should insert the name of the organization: Fundacja Inna Przestrzeń, KRS (National Court Register) number: 0000257224, and the amount which must not exceed 1% of due tax resulting from the tax declaration, rounded down to full tens of groszy.

¹ Olympic Charter, Fundamental Principles of Olympism, paragraph 2 (in force as of 01.09.2004), source: Polski Portal Olimpijski PKOl, www.olimpijski.pl.

² Olympic Charter, Fundamental Principles of Olympism, paragraph 5 (in force as of 01.09.2004), source: Polski Portal Olimpijski PKOl, www.olimpijski.pl.

³ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, OJ of 1977 no. 38, item 167, part III, art. 7.

⁴ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, resolution by United Nations General Assembly 217 A (III) adopted and proclaimed on 10.12.1948, art. 8.

⁵ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, resolution by United Nations General Assembly 217 A (III) adopted and proclaimed on 10.12.1948, art. 3.

⁶ Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, Human Rights Situation in Tibet, Annual Report 2007, www.tchrd.org

⁷ Constitution of People's Republic of China proclaimed on 04.12.1982.

⁸ Text *6 months left for China to fulfill human rights promises given 7 years ago* was written on the basis of materials elaborated by Human Rights in China in cooperation with The International Campaign for Tibet.

⁹ Publication of the book will be accompanied by the conference, which representatives of partner organizations, organizations creating the coalition and invited experts will take part in.

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www.przestrzen.art.pl | www.amnesty.org.pl
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