

ONE WORLD | ONE DREAM | FREE TIBET

Aug. 8th Beijing Olympics One-Year Countdown Day of Action

MAIN TALKING POINTS

#1 The Chinese government is using the 2008 Olympics as a tool to legitimize its illegal occupation of Tibet and to gain acceptance as a leader on the world stage.

#2 The IOC is allowing the Chinese authorities to use the Olympics as a platform to promote China's image as a free and open society and Tibetans as happy and prosperous under Chinese rule.

#3 The Beijing Olympics are an unprecedented opportunity to expose the reality of China's violent rule in Tibet and to push for the Tibetan people's fundamental right to self determination

#4 As the Chinese prepare to celebrate the One Year Countdown to the 2008 Olympics, Tibetans and their supporter and people of conscience around the world are calling on China and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to take immediate steps to address the Tibetan issue. We're putting them on notice that we will be escalating this campaign in the coming year.

Media & Messaging Q & A:

Q) Why are you here?

A) I'm here to speak out against the Chinese government's use of the Olympics as a platform to promote the image of China as a free and open society and Tibetans as happy and prosperous under Chinese occupation.

China hopes the Olympic glow will blind the global community to the suffering of the Tibetan people and rampant repression in China.

Tibetans and people of conscience around the world are taking action on the One Year Countdown to the Olympics to demand a solution to the occupation of Tibet before the start of the Games.

Q) What do you hope to accomplish?

A) I'm here to demand the International Olympic Committee (IOC) stop allowing the Chinese government to use the Beijing Olympics as a tool to legitimize China's occupation of Tibet.

The IOC must immediately halt all plans to allow China to run the Olympic torch through

Tibet and to the summit of Mount Everest, a move designed to underscore its claim over the region.

With a year to go until the start of the Games we're putting the Chinese government and the IOC on notice that we'll be escalating the campaign for a resolution to the Tibet issue in the coming year.

I hope that my actions have helped to expose the reality of China's violent rule in Tibet.

Q) Isn't this an extreme action to take?

A) The situation in Tibet at the moment is critical and demands action. I am participating in this peaceful protest to draw international attention to China's brutal occupation of Tibet and to pressure the Chinese government and the IOC to immediately address the issue or face growing protests in the lead up to and during the Games.

Q) Isn't this an insult to Chinese people?

A) No. The Chinese government's use of the Olympics as a tool to legitimize its rule in Tibet is an insult to Tibetans and anyone who believes in the Olympic ideals of peace and human dignity. I believe we have a responsibility to shine the international spotlight of scrutiny on China at this time.

Q)) Aren't the Olympics meant to be all about sports and not politics/why are you politicizing the Olympics?

A) We wish the Olympics could just be about sports, but unfortunately the Chinese government, supported by a complicit IOC, has politicized the 2008 Games.

By running the torch through Tibet, choosing the Tibetan antelope as an Olympic mascot and including Tibetan dance and song into all Olympics celebrations, China is blatantly using the Olympics as a platform to legitimize its illegal occupation of Tibet.

By shining the light on China's brutalities in the context of the Olympic, we are joining a long line of conscientious citizens speaking out against injustice - from the protesters at Hitler's 1936 Summer Games to the athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos who performed a Black Power salute in defence of Civil Rights at the 1968 Olympics. If the IOC wants to remain apolitical, they shouldn't pick host countries that rank among the worst human rights abusers in the world.

Q) Do you think this kind of action is effective?

A) Yes, as China is preparing to hold the Olympic Games in a year's time, this is a critical moment for the international spotlight to shine on China's ongoing occupation of Tibet. This action is a call to people everywhere to do what you can over the next year to pressure the IOC and the Chinese government to resolve this issue.

Q) Don't you think this just upsets the Chinese government?

A) The Chinese government cares about its international reputation, that's why they are using these Games to gain acceptance as a global leader. Our goal is to make the occupation of Tibet too costly in terms of China's international reputation.

The Chinese government is trying to use the Olympics to cover up its brutal occupation of Tibet. It is important that they feel heat from the international community

Additional Talking Points

Until China and the IOC address the ongoing military occupation of Tibet, they will continue to face embarrassing protests in the lead up to and during the Beijing Olympics, and will never truly be accepted as a respected leader on the world stage

The Chinese government is one of the world's worst human rights abusers.

We're calling on the IOC to stand by the commitment it made to the world community in 2001, that if the human rights situation did not improve prior to the Games, action would be taken.

Instead, the IOC is allowing the Chinese government to use these Games as a platform to promote a false image of Chinese society as free and open.

In Tibet over the past six years we've seen a hardening in the Chinese government's position on His Holiness the Dalai Lama, increased religious repression, a massive campaign to force Tibetan nomads off their traditional land, and increased social and economic marginalization following the launch of the China-Tibet railway.

In 2001, when China was awarded the honor of hosting the Olympic Games, the IOC promised that these Games would bring improvements in human rights.

Talking Points on Olympic Torch Relay:

#1 Students for a Free Tibet condemns the International Olympic Committee (IOC)'s approval of China's plan to take the 2008 Olympic torch over Everest and through Tibet.

#2 It shows the IOC's mark of approval for China's occupation of Tibet. The IOC has no business bolstering Chinese government claims over Tibet or aiding its propaganda efforts.

#3 The Olympic torch is meant to symbolize "peace and friendship" and allowing the torch through occupied Tibet would render these ideals nothing but a cruel joke.

Background

IOC President Jacques Rogge who asserted in 2001 that “We are convinced that the Olympic Games will improve human rights in China.”

According to a report released by Human Rights Watch release last week, “the Chinese government shows no substantive progress in addressing long-standing human rights concerns”.

The Olympic charter defines Olympic values as “a way of life based on respect for universal fundamental ethical principles...encouraging the establishment of a peaceful society, concerned with the preservation of human dignity.

The Chinese continues to restrict foreign journalists from accessing to Tibet and a recent survey by the FCC in Beijing found the 95% of those surveyed do not believe media conditions in China comply with international standards.

"This is not a simple sports event at all," said Tu Mingde, a vice president of the Chinese Olympic Committee and a key member of the winning bid committee. "Its meaning surpasses the importance of sports itself."