

In Solidarity with Tibetans and Uighurs, Czech Senate Calls for a Diplomatic Boycott of 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing

Senate adopts Resolution urging the Government of the Czech Republic not to legitimize the suppression of human rights and freedoms by the People's Republic of China.

PRAGUE, 10 June 2021 –

calling on the Czech government to boycott the 2022 Winter Olympics in China, arguing that failing to do so would legitimize the suppression of

human rights and freedoms by the People's Republic of China. In the adopted Resolution, senators expressed concern about the Chinese oppression of Tibetans and Uighurs and urged the Czech government to actively advocate for a thorough review of China's compliance with international human rights obligations.

“China continues to violate international human rights conventions, and reports of constant repression of the Uighurs or a hermetically sealed Tibet are just the tip of the iceberg,” said Senator Pavel Fischer, Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Security, and chief sponsor of the Resolution. *“Care must be taken to ensure that China does not politically abuse the Olympics to legitimize further discrimination, violence, and the suppression of fundamental rights.”*

Sen. Fischer added: *“In connection with the Beijing Olympics, the international community should step up pressure [on China] to respect human rights,”* which is a fundamental principle of the Olympic Charter.

Senator Přemysl Rabas, Chairman of the Senate Group of Friends of Tibet, said: *“Former Prime Minister of the Tibetan government-in-exile, Lobsang Sangay, has long warned that the Winter Olympics in China, like the Summer Games in 2008, will be associated with a significant tightening of freedoms and targeted human rights violations. I believe that a similar stand as the Czech Senate will be taken by other democratic institutions all over the world. As I recently assured the new Tibetan Prime Minister, Penpa Tsering, Tibetans will always have allies in the Czech Republic, and this Resolution is a demonstration of that commitment.”*

Former Member of Parliament Katerina Bursik Jacques, Secretary of the Senate Group of Friends of Tibet, said: *“It has been more than a decade since the Czech Parliament adopted a Resolution supporting Tibet; the last one passed in the Chamber of Deputies in 2008, and it's been 23 years for similar action from the Senate. In other words, today's firm support for the people of Tibet and Xinjiang was long overdue. The Czech Republic maintains a strong sense of solidarity with those whose freedoms are restricted, not just in China, but everywhere in the world. Protecting human rights is a priority for many Czechs, who remember only too well our own experience with totalitarianism.”*

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THE SENATE OF THE PARLIAMENT OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

I. Acknowledges

The ideals of the Olympic Charter, which include respect for the preservation of human dignity and non-discrimination on grounds of race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality or social origin, property, origin or another status among the basic principles and values of Olympism;

II. Notes with concern that

1. There are massive violations of human rights and freedoms, genocide and crimes against humanity, ethnic discrimination, and the suppression of cultural, religious and political identity in the People's Republic of China (PRC), in particular in the Autonomous Regions of Tibet and Xinjiang;
2. The Government of the PRC, despite official repeated requests from representatives of the UN Human Rights Council, refuses to grant access to independent missions of the international community;
3. The Government of the PRC, contrary to its commitment to hold the Olympic Games as "free and open," already misused the 2008 Olympic Games to further suppress human rights and freedoms and restrict freedom of expression;

III. Makes and appeals to

1. The Government of the Czech Republic to evaluate the fulfilment of international human rights obligations by the PRC, to systematically comment on the human rights situation in the PRC at the UN Human Rights Council or the UN General Assembly, and to actively support similar initiatives of other countries;
2. The government and other political representatives of the Czech Republic to reject the invitation to participate in the Olympic Games in the PRC, as their presence could be misused to legitimize further discrimination, violence, and suppression of fundamental rights;
3. The Czech Olympic Committee, when selecting the organizers of the Games, to ensure their readiness to comply with the principles of the Olympic Charter and its other international obligations and to prevent the abuse of the Olympic Games for political propaganda;

IV. Reminds of

1. The criticisms the International Olympic Committee faced in 2008 for failing to anticipate violations of freedom of expression and of the press by the Government of the People's Republic of China, which also had a negative impact on the work of the international media and participants in the 2008 Olympic Games;

2. The Resolution of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic No. 131 of 20 March 2019 on the Petition for an End to the Genocide of Falun Gong Practitioners Committed by the Chinese Regime;

V. Assigns the task

To the President of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, Senator Miloš Vystrčil, to inform the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic and the President of the Czech Olympic Committee of this Resolution.