

President Thomas Bach
Maison Olympique
1007 Lausanne, Switzerland
enquiries.contact@olympic.org

Amsterdam, 31st January, 2022

Re: IOC must ensure freedom of information and guarantee journalists' rights during Winter Olympic Games in China

Dear Mr. President Thomas Bach,

We are writing as members of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the world's largest organisation of journalists representing over 600.000 members in more than 140 countries, to express our serious concerns over the working conditions of journalists covering the Winter Olympic Games organised in Beijing and the threats to their privacy and security.

Our concerns are based on the Chinese government's long track record of media freedom violations in recent decades and its status as world's biggest jailer of journalists as documented by our organisation and many others. The media crackdown has intensified in recent years, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic surge, which has been widely used by the authorities to ban the entry of journalists and impede their ability to do their important work despite complying with all hygiene and safety regulations.

The IFJ, its Asia-Pacific branch, dozens of its affiliates and many groups defending human rights and freedom of expression have documented and exposed such incidents over the past years.

Besides the general crackdown on independent media, the Chinese authorities have repeatedly ignored the demands by the Foreign Correspondents Club of China (FCCC) to improve the working environment for journalists covering the Winter Olympics and have planned deep restrictions over journalists' freedom of movement which will lead to inevitable censorship and limited reporting during the Games.

Additionally, several international reporters have denounced intimidation, threats, censorship, and denial of accreditations by the Beijing Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (BOCOG), while many have warned of the high risk of journalists' devices being hacked and tracked.

In this regard, we are calling on the Olympics Committee to take a clear stand for journalists' rights and unequivocally tell the Chinese authorities that they must commit to fundamental press freedom principles and protect journalists' rights. China must treat our colleagues equally regardless of their country of origin and should not interfere in their communications during their professional stay in China.

The success of the Winter Olympic Games will depend on journalists' ability to work and report freely during the event, without censorship, threats, or spying practices from the Chinese authorities.

Yours sincerely,

Renske Heddema
Chairman of the Board

Thomas Bruning
Secretary to the Board