

International Steering Committee



The Nongovernmental Process of the Community of Democracies

Paul Graham, Chairman
South Africa

Vo Van Ai
Vietnam

Sama Leftawi Awidha
Palestine

Amina Bouayach
Morocco

Hoda Chalak
Lebanon

Soon Juan Chee
Singapore

Yuri Dzhibladze
Russia

João Carlos Espada
Portugal

Hannah Forster
The Gambia

David French
United Kingdom

Morton Halperin
United States

Michael Kau
Taiwan

Mohsen Marzouk
Tunisia

Oumar Makalou
Mali

George Mathew
India

Matteo Mecacci
Italy

Gus Miclat
Philippines

Ilona Mihaies
Romania

Richard Rowson
United States

Andrea Sanhueza
Chile

Roel von Meijenfeldt
Netherlands

Dieudonné Zognong
Cameroon

ISC Secretariat:
Council for a Community of
Democracies
1801 F Street NW
Washington, DC 20006
USA
Tel +1-202-789-9771
Fax +1-202-789-9764
Email: info@ccd21.org
www.ccd21.org

April 16, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ISC Statement on the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games

The opening of the Olympic Games on August 8 of this year in Beijing ought to be a joyous occasion, where the people of the world's largest nation host a great celebration of human achievement, giving them an unprecedented opportunity to share and engage with people from all parts of the world.

Unfortunately, the government of China has failed to live up to the promises it made to the international community when it asked for the privilege to host the Olympic Games, namely to improve the conditions of human rights for all the people of China. It is now apparent that, rather than progress, human rights in China have only regressed since the Olympics were awarded to Beijing.

We call on China to take urgent steps towards fulfilling its promises before the Games begin, including the following:

- 1) Cease its military crackdown against the Tibetan people, welcome an international investigation of the events in recent weeks in Tibet, and enter into a genuine dialogue with the Dalai Lama;
- 2) Release prisoners of conscience, in particular all those who have been imprisoned or detained for expressing doubts or criticism about the Olympics itself, such as Hu Jia, Ye Guozhu, and Yang Chunlin; and
- 3) Fully implement the previously-promised lifting of restrictions on international media reporting.

If China does not take these steps, we call on the international community, especially the members of the Community of Democracies, to take stronger steps to convey their disappointment. For example, political leaders of democracies should cancel or downgrade their attendance at the Games, in particular by not attending the opening ceremony. Regardless of China's response, all members of the Community of Democracies must cease forthwith all attempts to restrict the freedom of expression of athletes and other participants in the Games, which are abhorrent measures in themselves.

The Olympics have never been purely about sport, and precisely for that reason, they have the potential to bring positive change to countries that host it. We only hope that it is not too late for the people of China.

The ISC is a global network of civil society organizations committed to democracy and human rights, related to the Community of Democracies.