



MEMBERS OF THE SEIMAS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

Gedimino Ave. 53, 01109 Vilnius

Appeal of Members of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania on the Boycott of the Olympic Games in Beijing

12 November 2021, Vilnius

The Olympic Games in China scheduled for February 2022 will offer yet another occasion for the authoritarian Communist regime to demonstrate its power in order to prove to the whole world that oppression of nations, authoritarian policy, disregard for human rights, and threats of starting the Third World War can be combined with a hypocritical discourse on the peaceful mission of the Olympic Movement without having to face any principled reaction from states that call themselves democratic.

Before the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, many states entertained naive hopes that, by participation in the Games, they could contribute to the democratisation of China and motivate China to respect human rights of all people under its rule. However, China's aggression, violence against Uighurs and the occupied Tibet, and aggressive behaviour towards Hong Kong and Taiwan have only intensified as a result. The participation of democratic states in the Games has merely reinforced the authoritarian regime's belief in impunity.

The 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing, whose officials respond to criticism by inadequate diplomatic measures, are destined to become a sad replica of the Olympics in the Nazi Berlin in 1936.

The Nazi German Government of the time benefited from the Olympic Games for promoting the image of its regime. The participation in the Olympic Games of the very nations that had criticised Nazism emboldened the regime to turn to more aggressive and repressive measures, thus bringing the world war closer.

Can we draw any lessons from history? Do we want to further fuel the aggression of the Chinese authorities? Are we determined to pay a blind eye to the daily suffering of the Uighurs, Tibetans, Falun Gong followers, and political dissidents oppressed by the Chinese authorities? Will we remain indifferent to the increasingly aggressive conduct of China with regard to Hong Kong and Taiwan?

Hundreds of human rights organisations provide factual data on criminal functioning of the Chinese regime and call for a boycott of the Olympic Games where politics have overshadowed the Olympic spirit.

Therefore, we appeal to the Lithuanian National Olympic Committee and the leaders of all sports federations operating in Lithuania, calling on them for maintaining a position of principle that prestigious international sports tournaments and championships cannot take place in authoritarian states where human rights are not respected and where regimes try to employ sports for the promotion of their own image.

We also call on the President of the Republic of Lithuania, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, and all Lithuanian politicians to boycott the Chinese Olympic Games, to refrain from participation in the opening and closing events of the Games, and to avoid sending any official state delegations to the Olympic Games in Beijing.

We equally appeal to Lithuanian athletes who have merited invitations to the Beijing Games, urging them to demonstrate their civic position and refrain from participation in events where they will be used as puppets of a show directed by the authoritarian regime. Today, a position of principle alone can help protect sport from any temptation of turning it into a policy tool.

Signed by the Members of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania:

LAIMA ANDRIKIENĖ *L. Andrikiene*
L. Andrikiene
Paulius Kermešeris
 Andrius Navichas *Andrius Navichas*
 KRISTIJONAS BARTOSEVICIUS *Kristijonas Bartosevičius*
Angelis Zingys
Jurgita Ščiūnienė
 DONALDAS VAITKUS *Donaldas Vaitkus*
 Marius Matijausaitis *Marijus Matijausaitis*
 Ieva Pečiulytė *Ieva Pečiulytė*
 Arūnas Nalinskas *Arūnas Nalinskas*
 Tomas V. Raskavičius *Tomas V. Raskavičius*
 ANDRIUS VYŠNIAUSKAS *Andrius Vyšniauskas*
Kęstutis Marinkis & Marius
 Doule Šešalienė *Doule Šešalienė*