



August 2, 2013  
New York, NY

**Attn: Candidates for International Olympic Committee Presidency**

c/o International Olympic Committee  
Château de Vidy  
1007 Lausanne, Switzerland

**Subject: Questionnaire for All Candidates for IOC Presidency Regarding Olympic Values and Human Rights**

We are writing with regard to the upcoming election of the next International Olympic Committee President, at the 125th IOC session which will take place on September 10 in Buenos Aires.

Both Human Rights Watch and the Committee to Protect Journalists are deeply concerned about serious human rights abuses linked to the organization of the 2014 Sochi Olympics, including the worsening climate for media freedom in Russia, and more broadly about the risk of similar abuses in future host countries in the absence of systemic reforms within the Olympic Movement.

The International Olympic Committee is the “supreme authority of the Olympic movement.” The guiding principle of Olympism is enshrined in the [Olympic Charter](#) placing “sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity.” A report from the 2009 13th Olympic Congress specifies that “all members of the Olympic Movement should work together in pursuit of the harmonious development of men and women in order to promote through sport a peaceful society based on the most fundamental common principles and values inherent in a civilized society.” For the implementation of this recommendation, the **IOC committed to intervening at the level of the Olympic Games Organizing Committees “in the event of serious abuse,”** including: “Mistreatment of people displaced due to Olympic venue construction; Abuse of migrant workers at Olympic venue construction sites; Child labour; and Improper restrictions on the media’s freedom to cover the Games, including cultural aspects.”

Since 2006, in the run-up to the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing, Human Rights Watch has been pressing the IOC to address Olympics-related human rights violations, including through letters, meetings, and official submissions. In 2009, in advance of the Olympic Congress in Copenhagen, Human Rights Watch made a detailed submission calling on the members of the Olympic Movement to create a permanent mechanism to monitor human rights in host countries

before, during, and after the Olympic Games. Human Rights Watch has also reported on and advocated strongly for the **nondiscrimination requirements of the Olympic Charter**, including for women from Saudi Arabia to participate in the London Olympics and against the Russian government's anti-LGBT rights legislation.

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has brought delegations of concerned journalists to [Lausanne](#) and [Beijing](#) to advocate for media and Internet freedoms, which is an ironclad requirement for all host countries.

With regards to Sochi 2014, CPJ is particularly concerned about the growing [anti-press and anti-freedom-of-expression climate](#) in Russia, which is being nurtured from the very top. CPJ is also concerned about the Kremlin-fostered anti-foreign [moods in society](#) – not a healthy attitude when the country is on the threshold of embracing international athletes, reporters, and other visitors for the Games. Recent anti-press actions include [the re-criminalization of defamation](#) and [the censoring of the Internet](#), the continued [threats](#) and [attacks](#) on journalists, the ongoing [journalist murders](#), and the lasting [impunity](#) in such cases.

Impunity concerns are the highest in killings committed in Russia's [North Caucasus](#) region, which neighbors Sochi. With the volatile region in such close proximity to the Games site, CPJ is concerned about security issues being used as pretext to obstruct journalist access to local news and events of public interest.

Because the new IOC president will be tasked with upholding the essential principles of the Olympic Charter, we believe that the selection process should include a clear explanation of each candidate's views on key questions related to these principles. We have prepared a set of questions, and urge each candidate to respond. We will be making these responses public.

### ***Six questions for IOC Presidency Candidates***

#### **1. On the Second Fundamental Principle of Olympism**

According to the Second Fundamental Principle of Olympism, “The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity.”

- *As IOC President, what specific measures would you take to ensure that the selection of future host countries fully and meaningfully evaluates governments' commitment to respect human rights in compliance with this principle and international human rights norms?*

#### **2. On the principle of nondiscrimination**

The Sixth Fundamental Principle of Olympism states, “Any form of discrimination with regard to a country or a person on grounds of race, religion, politics, gender or otherwise is incompatible with belonging to the Olympic Movement.”

- *As IOC President, what specific measures would you require future host countries and participating nations to undertake in order to ensure full respect for the principle of nondiscrimination, for example by ensuring that women or LGBT athletes from all participating nations can compete in the Olympics? How would you ensure that the safety of*

LGBT athletes and guests to the Olympics is guaranteed when a Games host country criminalizes homosexuality?

### **3. On the principle of media freedom**

As specified by Rule 48 of the Olympic Charter, “The IOC takes all necessary steps in order to ensure the fullest coverage by the different media and the widest possible audience in the world for the Olympic Games.”

- As IOC President, what specific steps would you require from host countries to ensure media are allowed to pursue “the fullest coverage,” without restrictions, by allowing both domestic and foreign journalists to report freely, including on potential rights abuses occurring in the context of the Games (in the run-up to, during, and in the immediate aftermath of the Games)? How would you have handled the Chinese government’s failure to allow the promised Internet and reporting freedom before and during the 2008 Games?

### **4. On human rights concerns related to the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi**

As the IOC is well aware, Human Rights Watch and the Committee to Protect Journalists have serious concerns that we have expressed and reported on over a period of four years regarding ongoing rights abuses related to preparations for the 2014 Sochi Olympics, including abuses against migrant workers described in the report “[Race to the Bottom](#),” forced evictions, the [crackdown](#) on press and civil society, and a pernicious, homophobic [new law](#).

- As IOC President, what specific steps will you take to insist on media freedoms, an end to threats against civil society, and a repeal of homophobic laws in Russia, where the Sochi Games are to take place? What steps will you take to ensure people are not forcibly evicted from their homes without compensation and that workers building Olympic venues are not exploited?

### **5. On the need for systemic reform of the Olympic Movement**

Human Rights Watch submitted a [proposal](#) for systemic reform to the 2009 Copenhagen Congress, calling for the “creation of an IOC standing committee on human rights to monitor human rights in host countries.” A recent [report](#) by CPJ found that a consistent stance on basic rights would bolster the IOC’s position, not erode it; hesitance to promote human rights tarnishes the Olympics.

- As IOC President, what specific steps will you take to support the creation of such a committee or similar mechanism to monitor human rights abuses caused by the Olympics and to ensure that the human rights requirements of host countries, including press freedom and nondiscrimination, are honored?

### **6. Willingness to meet with Olympic stakeholders**

To discuss these and other concerns, we are requesting a briefing session with all candidates to brief you on research into human rights abuses created by or linked to the 2014 Sochi Winter Games and past Olympics, and to give you an opportunity to set out your position in relation to press freedom and human rights in the Olympic movement. We have staff around the world and can meet in New York or any convenient capital.

- As candidate for IOC President, will you be able to meet us? Will your manifesto include human rights as a central plank?

We look forward to your answers and thank you in advance for your attention to these concerns.

Sincerely,



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