



H.Res. 1370 – Calling on the Government of the People's Republic of China to immediately end abuses of the human rights of its citizens, to cease repression of Tibetan and Uighur citizens, and to end its support for the Governments of Sudan and Burma to ensure that the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games take place in an atmosphere that honors the Olympic traditions of freedom and openness

FLOOR SITUATION

H.Res. 1370 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Howard Berman (D-CA) on July 23, 2008. The House Committee on Foreign Affairs ordered the resolution to be reported, as amended, by voice vote on July 24, 2008.

H.Res. 1370 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on July 30, 2008.

SUMMARY

H.Res. 1370 resolves that the House of Representatives:

- Calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to immediately end abuses of the human rights of its citizens, to cease repression of Tibetan and Uighur people, and to end its support for the Governments of Sudan and Burma to ensure that the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games take place in an atmosphere that honors the Olympic traditions of freedom and openness;
- Calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to immediately release all those imprisoned or detained for nonviolently exercising their political and religious rights and their right to free expression, such as Hu Jia, who have been imprisoned, detained, or harassed for seeking to hold China accountable to commitments to improve human rights conditions announced when bidding to host the Olympic Games, embodied in China's own laws and regulations, and in international agreements;
- Calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to honor its commitment to freedom of the press for foreign reporters in China before and during the Olympic Games, to make those commitments permanent, and publicly to guarantee an immediate end to the detention, harassment, and intimidation of both foreign and domestic reporters;
- Calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to permit visitors to China, including through the issuance of visas, for the period surrounding the Olympics, regardless of religious background, belief, or political opinion;
- Calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to guarantee freedom of movement within China during the period surrounding the Olympics for all visitors, participants, and journalists visiting China for the Olympics, and such freedom of movement should include the freedom to visit Tibet, Xinjiang, China's border regions, and all other areas of China without restriction and without special permits or advance notice;
- Calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to guarantee access to information by Chinese citizens and foreign visitors, including full access to domestic and overseas broadcasts, print media, and websites that in the past may have been excluded, censored, jammed, or blocked;
- Calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to permit political dissidents, protesters, petitioners, religious activists, minorities, the disabled, the homeless, and others to maintain their homes, usual locations, jobs, freedom of movement, and freedom to engage in peaceful activities during the period surrounding the Olympics;
- Calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to end the exploitative and dangerous conditions faced by Chinese workers in many state enterprises and other commercial entities;



- Calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to begin earnest negotiations, without preconditions, directly with His Holiness the Dalai Lama or his representatives, on the future of Tibet to provide for a mutually agreeable solution that addresses the legitimate grievances of, and provides genuine autonomy for, the Tibetan people;
- Calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to end its political, economic, and military support for the Government of Sudan until the violent attacks in Darfur have ceased and the Sudanese Government has allowed for the full deployment of the United Nations-African Union Mission peacekeeping force in Darfur;
- Calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to end its political, economic, and military support for the Government of Burma until democracy is restored in Burma, human rights abuses have ceased, and Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners of conscience are released;
- Calls on the President to make a strong public statement on China's human rights situation prior to his departure to Beijing for the Olympic Games, to make a similar statement in Beijing and meet with the families of jailed prisoners of conscience, and to seek to visit Tibet and Xinjiang while in China to attend the Olympic Games;
- Calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to abandon its coercive population control policy which includes forced abortion and involuntary sterilization; and
- Calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to review the political prisoner list published by the Congressional-Executive Commission on China with a view to releasing ill and aged prisoners on humanitarian grounds, and to releasing those imprisoned in violation of Chinese law or international human rights law.

BACKGROUND

The Summer Olympics will be held in Beijing, China from August 8 to August 24, 2008. Approximately 10,500 athletes are expected to compete in 302 events in 28 sports at this international event. The Olympic Games were awarded to Beijing after a ballot of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 2001.

China has a history of human rights violations, including limiting freedoms of speech, press, religion, movement, assembly, and political dissent. Particularly, China has committed well-documented human rights abuses in the region of Tibet. The Chinese government also systematically represses and harasses HIV/AIDS activists. On June 26, 2008, the Congressional-Executive Commission on China published a list of 734 political prisoners detained in China for exercising rights guaranteed under Chinese law and Constitution.

China had pledged that it would allow open media access during the Olympic games, but the nongovernmental organization Human Rights Watch alleges that it has failed to do so. There is concern that Chinese citizens and foreign visitors will not have free access to information if China continues to block and filter Internet access. China has also been struggling with air pollution in the city of Beijing and surrounding areas, which the Beijing Organizing Committee is attempting to clean-up before the games begin.

STAFF CONTACT

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