



International
Olympic
Committee

Corporate Communications and
Public Affairs Department

Public

Overseas Press Club of America
Ms Patricia Kranz
Mr William J. Holstein
40 West 45th Street
New York
NY 10036
USA

Lausanne, 14 June 2021

Dear Executive Director Kranz, Dear Co-Chair Holstein,

Thank you for your letter and your interest in the Olympic Games.

We firmly believe that the Olympic Games are a platform for cooperation and constructive engagement, and it is on this basis that we work with all our hosts. The Olympic Games are the only event that brings the entire world together in peaceful competition.

The role of the Games and the IOC in promoting peace, unity and global solidarity was acknowledged in a United Nations' resolution last December, which was adopted by consensus. The resolution welcomed "with appreciation all upcoming Olympic and Paralympic Games, in particular those to be held in Tokyo in 2021, in Beijing in 2022, in Paris in 2024, in Milano Cortina, Italy, in 2026 and in Los Angeles, United States of America, in 2028, as well as the Youth Olympic Games to be held in Dakar in 2026".

In addition, the G20 Leaders reiterated their strong support for the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 and the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 in the final declaration of their Virtual G20 Leaders' Summit last November, saying: "As a symbol of humanity's resilience and global unity in overcoming COVID-19, we commend Japan's determination to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 next year. (...) We look forward to the Beijing Winter Olympics in 2022."

We believe that the media plays a major role in delivering that constructive engagement through its coverage of the Olympic Games. This is why Rule 48.1 of the [Olympic Charter](#) states that: "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."

The IOC has therefore taken important steps as part of the candidature process and is working constantly to ensure that the media are able to report on the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022.

The Evaluation Commission for the Olympic Winter Games 2022 wrote in its [evaluation report](#): “During the evaluation process, the Commission considered statements and opinions in independent third-party reports with regard to environmental protection, the treatment of detainees, media freedom, Internet access, the right to demonstrate, and the integrity of the judicial and electoral systems. The Commission raised these issues with Beijing 2022 and government authorities and sought assurances that the Host City Contract and the Olympic Charter would be respected for all participants of the Olympic Games and in Olympic related matters. At the same time, the IOC has to respect the laws of a sovereign state. Written assurances were provided regarding the following matters: human rights, the right to demonstrate, media freedom to report on the Games with no restrictions on the Internet, labour rights, displacement and environmental protection. Taking these into consideration, as well as the open nature of the discussions with Beijing 2022 and government authorities and China’s experience from organising the 2008 Olympic Games and the 2014 Youth Olympic Games, the Commission is confident that the Government of China would take all necessary measures to ensure the Olympic Charter and Host City Contract would be respected.”

The report subsequently goes on to state: “Centrally located, temporary Mountain Media Centres would serve the Yanqing and Zhangjiakou Zones, with capacity for written press and broadcast media. The Government of China has offered assurances that media seeking to report on the Games would have freedom to report and unrestricted Internet access, and would also be free to report on Games preparations.”

This freedom to report on the Games is also confirmed in the [Host City Contract for the XXIV Olympic Winter Games in 2022](#), which was signed by the host city authorities and says under section 53: “The OCOG must coordinate with the competent Host Country Authorities to ensure that: i. for the period starting with the opening of the International Broadcast Centre and of the Main Press Centre (approximately eight (8) weeks prior the scheduled commencement of the Games) until the end of the Paralympic Games, there shall be no restrictions or limitations on (a) the freedom of the media to provide independent news coverage of the Games and Paralympic Games as well as related events, and (b) the editorial independence of the material broadcasted or published by the media; (...)”

However, at the same time, the IOC has neither the remit nor the capability to change the laws or the political system of a sovereign country, including its rules that govern the ability of foreign media to cover stories outside the Olympic Games. This must remain the legitimate role of governments and respective intergovernmental organisations.

Given the diverse participation in the Olympic Games, the IOC must remain neutral on all global political issues. Awarding the Olympic Games to a National Olympic Committee

of a given country does not mean that the IOC agrees with the political structure, social circumstances or human rights standards in that country.

At all times, the IOC recognises and upholds human rights, as enshrined in both the Fundamental Principles of the Olympic Charter and in the IOC Code of Ethics. We are responsible for ensuring the respect of the Olympic Charter **with regard to the Olympic Games**, and you may rest assured that we take this responsibility very seriously.

We must be consistent and non-judgmental regarding the right of countries to govern themselves as they consider best for their own societies, whether or not other countries disagree or disapprove.

The Olympic Games are focused on the athletes, and for many of them it is going to be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to compete at an elite level without any discrimination, living together in one Olympic Village under the same roof and respecting the same rules. This IOC is determined to make these events a safe manifestation of peace, solidarity and the resilience of humankind in overcoming the pandemic.

Yours sincerely,



Christian Klaue
Director
Corporate Communications
and Public Affairs



Mark Adams
Director
Spokesperson's Services