



Scottish government joins US in diplomatic boycott of Winter Olympics

Tuesday 7 December 2021

The Scottish government has confirmed that it will not be sending any representatives to the Winter Olympics in China because of ongoing concern about the human rights situation – a situation which has led to some campaigners calling it the “Genocide Games”. This news comes as the US announces a diplomatic boycott of the Games. White House press secretary Jen Psaki made the announcement yesterday, 6 December 2021, and was very clear that the decision was based on China’s “ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang and other human rights abuses¹.”

In response to written questions² from Ross Greer MSP, on behalf of the Cross-Party Group on Tibet (CPGT), a Scottish Government spokesperson explained that they remained deeply concerned about “serious, widespread and systemic human rights abuses committed against members of the Uyghur and other minority ethnic communities in Xinjiang, as well as by China’s overall record of human rights violations, including in Tibet and in Hong Kong.” The response, which was made on Friday, was published on the parliamentary website yesterday, 6 December 2021.

The CPGT had recently joined the international campaign^{3,4} calling for a diplomatic boycott. The group is delighted that the Scottish Government has made their stance clear and chosen to prioritise human rights.

Mercedes Villalba MSP, CPGT Co-Chair, said:

“Everyone should have freedom of expression without fear of arbitrary punishment. Yet that basic right is denied to Tibetans and other peoples living under China’s control. That’s why it’s so important that our governments do not attend state sponsored cultural events in China like the Beijing Winter Olympics, as this tacit support provides political cover for the human rights abuses being committed.”

Ross Greer MSP, CPGT Co-Chair, said:

“Scotland’s commitment to human rights must be regularly demonstrated by our actions, not just our words. The absence of any Scottish Government representatives at the Games sends a clear signal that we will not turn a blind eye to the Chinese government’s crimes against the Tibetan and Uyghur peoples. This adds real momentum to the international boycott campaign at a critical moment. Governments across the world are now finally reconsidering their association with the brutality of Xi Jinping’s regime.”

The UK is one of many states currently considering a diplomatic boycott. MPs in Westminster voted in favour of such a measure on 15 July 2021⁵. However, in response to a call, on 25 November 2021, for an urgent debate to confirm a diplomatic boycott, the Leader of the House of Commons, Jacob Rees-Mogg MP, simply stated that “no tickets have been booked”. While this is welcome news, the Cross-Party Group on Tibet would urge the UK government to clarify its position in less ambiguous terms, as the US has done⁶.

ENDS

Press contact: Eleanor Byrne-Rosengren, Secretary, eleanor.tibet@gmail.com, @CPG_Tibet

About the Cross-Party Group on Tibet

The aim of the Cross-Party Group on Tibet is to raise awareness about Tibet and its culture, to promote human rights in Tibet and to advocate for a peaceful resolution to the political situation, in line with international law and Tibetan Buddhist principles.

www.cpg-tibet.weebly.com | [@cpg.tibet.scot](https://twitter.com/cpg.tibet.scot) | [@CPG_Tibet](https://twitter.com/CPG_Tibet)



Notes:

1. https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/us-beijing-winter-olympics-diplomatic-boycott/2021/12/06/1d2e9920-56b1-11ec-9a18-a506cf3aa31d_story.html
2. <https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/written-questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-04479>
3. <https://ipac.global/ipac-coordinates-legislative-actions-across-11-parliaments-on-beijing-olympics/>
4. <https://nobeijing2022.org/>
5. <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-07-15/debates/E27E0D4E-5C70-4184-A044-E9B0103AF01F/BeijingWinterOlympicsAndChineseGovernmentSanctions#main-content>
6. https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/us-beijing-winter-olympics-diplomatic-boycott/2021/12/06/1d2e9920-56b1-11ec-9a18-a506cf3aa31d_story.html