

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## MEDIA BRIEFING

**EMBARGO: Tuesday 29 July 05:00am Hong Kong time (Monday 28 July at 21:00 GMT)**

### **People's Republic of China The Olympics countdown –broken promises: Update**

Since the report “The Olympics countdown –broken promises” (Index: ASA 17/089/2008) of July 2008 went to press, Amnesty International has received further information which updates or clarifies certain areas in the report:

[See report, p.9-10] Housing rights activist **Ye Guozhu** was due to be released from prison on 26 July 2008, but he will now remain detained until after the end of the 2008 Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games. Ye Guozhu's family said the Chaobai prison authorities telephoned them on 22 July telling them not to go to the prison to receive Ye Guozhu on 26 July, the original date for his release. The prison authorities said that Beijing Xuanwu district police had taken Ye away. The Xuanwu district police later said that for the good of the family and to keep them out of trouble during the Olympic Games, the police would take care of Ye Guozhu but would not allow him to return home until sometime after 1 October 2008. On 26 July the police sent the family an official detention notice stating that Ye was being held at Xuanwu district police detention centre on suspicion of “gathering a crowd to disturb order in a public place”. Amnesty International deplores his ongoing detention and continues to call for his immediate and unconditional release.

[See report p.15, 16] In a letter to Amnesty International dated 23 July 2008 the IOC responded to Amnesty International's request to provide further clarification on restrictions on freedom of expression imposed by **Rule 51.3 of the Olympic Charter**. The IOC stated that the restrictions extend to non-sporting venues such as the Olympic village and the Main Press Centre, which require official Olympic accreditation. The IOC added that individuals are ‘free to share their opinions in media interviews in the Olympic Press or Broadcasting Centres or in mixed zones.’

Amnesty International had also raised concerns over paragraph 4 of the IOC's guidelines on the interpretation of Rule 51.3 which state that ‘the conduct of participants must comply with the laws of the host state’. Given that current restrictions on freedom of expression in law and practice in China do not comply with international human rights standards, Amnesty International had noted that this appears to be inherently incompatible with paragraph 1 of the guidelines, which states that “participants at the Olympic Games may of course express their opinions”. In addition, Amnesty International had noted that BOCOG's own rules for Olympics visitors impose restrictions which go far beyond those imposed by Rule 51.3 of the Olympic Charter.

In its letter of 23 July, the IOC stated that it had urged BOCOG to provide an English translation of its guidelines as soon as possible, but did not indicate whether or not it had raised the broader human rights concerns directly with the Chinese authorities. It added that ‘the IOC always advises athletes and guests to follow the laws [of the host country] whether they agree with them or not. The IOC is not in a position to force changes in the laws of any sovereign nation.’

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