



ISSN Print: 2394-7500  
ISSN Online: 2394-5869  
Impact Factor: 5.2  
IJAR 2016; 2(9): 30-32  
www.allresearchjournal.com  
Received: 07-07-2016  
Accepted: 08-08-2016

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## Role of human rights up lift the games

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### Abstract

Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible. Universal human rights are often expressed and guaranteed by law, in the forms of treaties, customary international law, general principles and other sources of international law. International human rights law lays down obligations of Governments to act in certain ways or to refrain from certain acts, in order to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups.

The practice of sport is a human right. Every individual must have the possibility of practising sport, without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play.

**Keywords:** Affirmative action, community, empathy, justice

### Introduction

Human rights have a vital role to play in sport that is often overlooked. From fighting racism, sexism and homophobia to standing up for the rights of the workers building stadiums, sport and human rights are intrinsically linked. Human rights are basic rights which many societies believe that all people should

We campaign around major sporting events like the World Cup to raise awareness of human rights abuses either in the host country, in the countries taking part or the event's sponsors. The relationship between the Olympic Games and human rights is extremely complex and dynamic. Therefore, the definition and complexities of human rights are examined in relation to the current international political paradigm and the power dynamics associated with the Games

### Sport for Peace, Values and Fair Play

“Sport and the Olympic ideal can also be a means to advance the cause of peace, promote development and combat all forms of discrimination. Sport is important in promoting human rights worldwide through interaction between different people and races. It unites many people on one issue irrespective of race, religion, and background. Discrimination could wither away with sport because sport teaches people co-operation, coordination and respect for others. In sport people from different cultures have the opportunity to work together in a team spirit. The universality of sport and Olympic ideals can educate people with regard to the values of respect, diversity, tolerance and fairness and serve as a means to combat all forms of discrimination and promote a coherent society.”

The IOC also spoke about the importance of strong partnerships between the sports movement, governments and national and international organisations, and urged governments everywhere to increase investment in sport so that everyone can benefit from greater access to safe, inclusive and adapted sport and its positive values.

### Sport as a Human Right, Social Inclusion and Development.

The IOC, which was granted UN Observer Status in 2009, has long enjoyed strong ties with individual UN agencies, working with them globally and for many years on a number of initiatives that use sport as a tool for development and peace. These ties were substantially strengthened in April this year when IOC President Thomas Bach and UN Secretary-Genera

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Ban Ki-moon signed an agreement at the UN headquarters in New York aimed at boosting collaboration between the two organizations at the highest level.

The agreement signed in April recognizes the goal of the IOC and the Olympic Movement to contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport without discrimination of any kind. It also calls for respect of the autonomous organization of sport.

Elite athletes and sports players have to begin training early - in most cases, before they are considered old enough to make their own decisions. This means children are vulnerable to exploitation by competitive parents or coaches.

Equally, because of poverty or unavailability of sporting facilities, some children who wish to take part in sport are unable to.



#### **Statement on sports and human rights at the UNA human rights council**

In 2007 and 2008, Human Rights Watch extensively documented human rights abuses linked to China's hosting of the 2008 Beijing Games, including forced evictions, abuses of migrant workers, media censorship, and a clampdown on civil society. Despite the Chinese government's pledges to the International Olympic Committee that the Games would bring rights improvements, these Olympics led directly to an overall deterioration of human rights in China.

This month, Human Rights Watch released a new report documenting the effective ban on women and girls playing sports or taking part in the Olympic Games in Saudi Arabia. Girls are not offered physical education in state schools, women's gyms have been closed down or allowed to operate only as health clubs attached to hospitals. No competitive sporting infrastructure for women exists. Neither the Saudi National Olympic Committee nor any of the 153 government-regulated sport clubs have a women's section. It is no surprise, therefore, that the kingdom is one of three countries never to have sent a female athlete to the Olympic Games. The International Olympic Committee should condition Saudi Arabia's participation in the Games on ending discrimination against women in sports, in line with kingdom's obligations under CEDAW and CRC.

Since 2008, Human Rights Watch has documented abuses in the Olympic site of Sochi, Russia. Harassment against civil society activists and independent bloggers that have been part of the broader political landscape in Russia also takes place against activists in Sochi who are critical of the authorities' preparations for the 2014 Winter Olympic

Games. In addition, Human Rights Watch has documented cases of migrant workers working on construction sites in Sochi who have been denied contracts and wages and who faced retaliation for protesting these violations. Human Rights Watch has also documented the authorities' unlawful expropriations and forced evictions to make way for Olympic venues and related infrastructure. The government has failed to consistently provide home owners whose properties are expropriated for Olympics-related projects with fair compensation or an effective mechanism to challenge the evictions. The IOC, the UN, and Russia's other international partners should press Russia to ensure that it conducts its Olympic preparations in line with its obligations under the ICCPR, ICESCR, and relevant ILO conventions and standards.

The International Olympic Committee and corporate sponsors have a clear responsibility to anticipate and address human rights abuses linked to the Olympics. But the IOC and other sporting bodies do not have institutions or individuals tasked with monitoring human rights abuses. Given the ugly legacy of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, and concerns about future Olympics, will this committee support Human Rights Watch's proposal for rights reform and monitoring within the International Olympic Committee?

The politics of international human rights have become increasingly intertwined with the Olympics. The human rights movement gathered steam after the atrocities of the Second World War, with the ideals of human rights, as defined in the 1948 United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR), closely mirroring those of Olympism outlined in the Olympic Charter. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Olympic Games have an extensive relationship with human rights. As a result, human rights are an important consideration in the planning of Olympics venues. The objective of this thesis is to provide insights into the current role of human rights in Olympic planning regarding the First Nations community in the 2010 Vancouver Games. First Nations are among the most marginalized groups that have faced systematic human rights abuses throughout history. Therefore, human rights are intrinsically linked to First Nations peoples and the Olympics. As a result of the complexities surrounding a definition for human rights, for the purpose of this thesis they are broadly defined, with only a further examination of human rights and the environment in regards to the First Nations involved in the planning of the 2010 Games. Thus, while the rights of other actors involved in the Olympic Games such as women and the athletes in general are no less important.

In order to understand the role human rights play in current Olympic planning, this thesis explores the role the Olympics play in the pro(de)motion of the human rights through a detailed historical analysis of the evolution of human rights in relation to the Olympics, drawing distinction between the role of human rights in developed and developing nations. An historical analysis aids in understanding the role of the Olympic Games in the pro (de) motion of international human rights and helps us to understand the importance of international sporting events in the current geo-political world order. The historical analysis highlights the ability to promote human rights with the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa and the democratization of South Korea, while adversely demoting the value of human rights as seen at the

Berlin, Mexico and Beijing Games. Furthermore, an analysis of the 2000 Sydney Games demonstrates a shift in the importance of human rights in Olympic planning in regards to First Nations. This shift provides insights into the planning of the 2010 Games and the important role of human rights.

### **Conclusion**

The history of human rights and the Olympic Games is complex and ever changing. Human rights are universally valid and an international sporting event such as the Olympics must recognize their position within the international community and responsibility in enforcing the ideals of human rights onto participatory nations. We are likely to see a continued emphasis of the importance of human rights in Olympic planning; however, the Olympics will never fill its full potential in promoting the ideals of human rights and Olympism until the underlying economic values of the Games are diminished and the international community places greater emphasis on the promotion of international human rights.

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