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Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China;
WEN Jiabao Guojia Zongli;
The State Council,
9 Xihuangcheng Genbeijie,
Beijingshi 100032,
People's Republic of China

Bern, June 3, 2008

Petition 将人权放在奥运会的奖台上, signed by 25'000 Swiss citizens

Excellency

First of all, I would like to extend my condolences and sympathy to the survivors of the earthquake that struck in Sichuan Province on 12 May. With the official death toll now over 50'000, hundreds of thousands injured and millions homeless we fully appreciate the tremendous challenges to governmental authorities posed by the massive relief and recovery needs of this disaster. I commend the prompt and serious way in which the authorities, by all accounts, are responding to the needs of the many victims of this tragedy, and the transparency and access it has extended to the media and international assistance.

With regard to the abovementioned petition I write you as an elected member of the Swiss Parliament, beneath the more than 25'000 petitioners. The petition 将人权放在奥运会的奖台上 was launched by the Swiss section of Amnesty International. By signing the petition, the signatories have welcomed to China hosting the Olympics and have referred to the promise of the Beijing 2008 bid committee that hosting the Olympic Games will help the development of human rights. They express, however, their concerns that today, shortly before the Games, human rights in China are still violated in many cases, in particular with regard to the application of the death penalty, reprisals against human rights defenders, "re-education through labour" camps and internet censorship.

On several occasions and without success, Amnesty International requested a meeting with representatives of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Bern in order to hand over the petitions and start a dialogue on human rights issues. The petitions were even refused when delivered by the Federal Security Service.

I am disappointed by this attitude of non-responsiveness which runs counter to China showcasing to the world by hosting the Olympic Games that it is an open and progressive country and which is, following the experiences of Amnesty International in other countries, not shared by all the Chinese embassies.

On behalf of the 25'000 citizens that have supported Amnesty's petition and together with 20 other members of the Swiss parliament I send you hereby a share of the signed petition forms. I thank you for accepting the petitions and for taking the postulations into consideration.

Sincerely Yours

Dr Jean-Charles Rielle
Conseiller national