

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 837

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the International Olympic Committee failed to adhere to its own human rights commitments.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 3, 2021

Ms. WEXTON (for herself and Mr. WALTZ) submitted the following resolution;
which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the International Olympic Committee failed to adhere to its own human rights commitments.

Whereas, on November 2, 2021, 3-time Olympian Peng Shuai went missing after she said in a since-deleted post on Chinese social media site Weibo that she had been sexually assaulted and forced into a sexual relationship with Zhang Gaoli, who was the Chinese Communist Party's Vice Premier from 2013 to 2018;

Whereas Chinese Communist Party authorities have imposed a media and internet blackout of discussions of Peng's case, and the words "tennis" and the surname "Peng" have been censored online within the People's Republic of China;

Whereas, on November 14, 2021, after Peng had not been seen or heard from for 12 days, Women’s Tennis Association (WTA) CEO Steve Simon requested a “full and transparent” investigation into Peng’s allegations;

Whereas the hashtag “#WhereIsPengShuai” trended across social media worldwide, with the exception of the People’s Republic of China where it is censored;

Whereas, on November 17, 2021, the WTA received a statement purporting to be from Peng, recanting her abuse claim and saying “everything is fine”;

Whereas, in response, WTA CEO Steve Simon said the response “released today by Chinese state media concerning Peng Shuai only raises my concerns as to her safety and whereabouts”;

Whereas, in response, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) said in a statement that it was “encouraged by assurance that she is safe”;

Whereas, on November 19 and 20, 2021, photos and videos of Peng appearing in her home, in a restaurant, and at a youth tennis event in Beijing emerged on Twitter accounts affiliated with government-run media, and at the same time, Peng has not spoken directly with the media or the WTA;

Whereas, on November 19, 2021, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said the White House is “deeply concerned” over Peng’s disappearance and seeks “independent and verifiable proof” of her location and condition;

Whereas, on November 19, 2021, Liz Throssell, the spokesperson of the United Nations Human Rights office, told reporters “. . . it would be important to have proof of

her whereabouts and wellbeing, and we would urge that there be an investigation with full transparency into her allegations of sexual assault”;

Whereas, on November 21, 2021, the IOC said in a statement that its President, Thomas Bach, had a 30-minute video call with 3-time Olympian Peng Shuai, joined by a Chinese sports official and an IOC official;

Whereas the statement said that, during the call, Peng appeared to be “doing fine” and “relaxed”, and said she “would like to have her privacy respected”;

Whereas the IOC did not explain how the video call with Peng had been organized, given the difficulties other concerned parties have had reaching her;

Whereas, on November 30, 2021, IOC official Dick Pound in an interview with CNN defended the Chinese Government’s handling of the situation and said the “unanimous conclusion” by IOC officials on the call is that Peng Shuai is “fine”;

Whereas the annual report of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China for 2020 finds that gender-based violence in the People’s Republic of China remains a serious issue, and highly publicized cases of sexual assault continue to surface;

Whereas the IOC’s acquiescence to the Chinese Communist Party regarding Peng’s sexual assault allegations and safety concerns diminish global demands for the Chinese Communist Party to investigate Peng’s allegations through a transparent and comprehensive process;

Whereas the role of IOC leadership in collaborating with Chinese Communist Party officials to cover up Peng Shuai’s allegations of sexual assault and disappearance call into

question the organization’s ability and willingness to hold abusers accountable and protect athletes participating in the 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Beijing; and

Whereas the IOC has provided the Beijing Organising Committee for the 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Games, controlled by the Chinese Communist Party, approximately \$890,00,000 “to ease the financial burden on the host cities”: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Rep-
2 resentatives that—

3 (1) by cooperating with the Chinese Communist
4 Party, the International Olympic Committee (IOC)
5 failed to adhere to its own human rights commit-
6 ments and protect the free speech of Olympic ath-
7 letes;

8 (2) the IOC has once again failed to protect
9 athletes from sexual abuse and harassment, and
10 should publicly commit to hold sexual violence abus-
11 ers accountable;

12 (3) the IOC’s conduct undermines the efforts
13 by the United States Government, human rights or-
14 ganizations, the Women’s Tennis Association, and
15 other international bodies and individuals to secure
16 Peng Shuai’s safety; and

17 (4) in an effort to regain lost public confidence,
18 the IOC should call on the Chinese Communist
19 Party to—

1 (A) open an independent and transparent
2 investigation into Peng's allegations;

3 (B) publicly commit to hold sexual violence
4 abusers accountable;

5 (C) cease all censorship of reporting and
6 discussions of Peng's case; and

7 (D) allow Peng to leave the People's Re-
8 public of China if she so desires, and not retali-
9 ate against family members remaining in the
10 People's Republic of China.

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