



human rights *first*

American ideals. Universal values.

Mr. Thomas Bach
President
International Olympic Committee
Château de Vidy
Case postale 356
1001 Lausanne, Switzerland

Dear President Bach:

Human Rights First welcomed your successful efforts and those of the entire International Olympic Committee to amend Principle 6, the anti-discrimination provision of the Olympic Charter, to include specific reference to sexual orientation. As you know, discrimination and violence against lesbians, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people is of great concern worldwide, and the IOC's leadership on this issue stands as an example to all.

This important advance is now facing a critical test. Kazakhstan, a country that is vying to host the 2022 Winter Olympic Games, is considering legislation patterned on a controversial Russian law that would ban "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations." The bill has been passed by the Kazakh legislature. If it is signed into law, it will threaten the fundamental freedoms, and indeed the safety, of LGBT people in Kazakhstan.

Because of Kazakhstan's Olympic bid and the clarity of Principle 6, you and the IOC are in a unique position to weigh in on this pending law. We ask you to urge Kazakh President Nursultan Nazabayev to honor his country's international human rights commitments and reject the homophobic bill now awaiting his signature.

The situation for members of the LGBT community in Kazakhstan is already precarious. Many LGBT people face discrimination and violence; some remain closeted out of fear. Police have failed consistently to respond to acts of violence against LGBT people, and in some cases police have perpetrated these acts. A recent wave of homophobic rhetoric has included calls for blood tests to identify and root out gay men.

We are deeply concerned that the pending legislation will further marginalize and criminalize the LGBT community, making an already dangerous and insecure environment even worse. This discriminatory bill is clearly out of step with the spirit of the Olympics and its fundamental principle of "plac[ing] sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind."

We urge you to take action immediately to make clear to President Nazabayev the inconsistency of this legislation with the Olympic Charter and to urge him to refrain from signing this odious bill into law.

Sincerely,

Shawn Gaylord
Advocacy Counsel, LGBT Rights