

Forum:	Economic and Social Council
Issue:	The question of countries with poor human rights records hosting international events
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Introduction

Every year, high-profiled international events such as the Olympics, the world expo and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) conference are being hosted by countries all around the world, involving some of the most powerful people in the world and watched by millions. However, the host countries of these events are more than just a venue, these events also contain strong political, social and economic undertones too.¹

However after the events of the Second World War, there have been a strong human rights movement ever since and consequently, human rights have become more and more intertwined with international events as concern grew over the safety of the people involved.²

Of course, there are debates going on regarding whether or not countries with poor human rights records should host such international events. Although the obvious argument is that these countries should be forbidden to do so out of fear of danger, many have argued that this should not be as having these countries host international events will expose the human rights atrocities to the rest of the world and thus, appropriate action can be taken.

Definition of Key Terms

Human Rights

Human Rights are rights that the United Nations (UN) has established to be inherent to all human beings without discrimination; no matter what language, gender, race or any other status. These rights include rights to life, education and social security, equality before the law, freedom of

¹ <http://comcul.ucalgary.ca/HumanRights> Schwarz, Cassandra. "Human Rights and the Olympic Games: The Role of International Sporting Events in the Promotion of the Rights of First Nations." *Communication and Culture*. University of Calgary, Apr. 2009. Web. 06 Dec. 2013.

² IBID

expression and many more.³ It is advisable that delegates read the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights could be advantageous and can be accessed at the following link:
<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

Human Rights Violations

Also deemed as 'crimes against humanity', these include all atrocities, such as slavery, genocide and rape, that infringe the most basic of human rights and consequently, it implies that the victim is undeserving of respect and dignity.⁴

International event

International events are events that are hosted by countries all over the world. These events may include sport events (Olympics, world cup...etc) or international conferences (APEC, ASEAN... etc)⁵

Boycott

In the context of International events, boycotting is the act of refusing to participate in and/or protesting an event for a variety of reasons⁶ such as if a country does not agree with the policies of the host country (e.g.: many US citizens want the USA to boycott the 2014 Sochi Olympics due to Russia's anti-gay policy).⁷

History

When it comes to international world events, the concern over human rights have no doubt spurred since the formation of the UN after World War II and its intentions to save future generations from the destruction of international conflict.⁸ However, despite an emphasis on such an issue,

³ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Pages/WhatAreHumanRights.aspx> "What Are Human Rights." *What Are Human Rights*. United Nation Human Rights, n.d. Web. 05 Dec. 2013.

⁴ <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/human-rights-violations> Maiese, Michelle. "Human Rights Violations | Beyond Intractability." *Human Rights Violations | Beyond Intractability*. Beyond Intractability, July 2003. Web. 06 Dec. 2013.

⁵ http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_is_the_definition_of_the_world_definition#slide=1 "What Is the Definition of the World Definition?" *WikiAnswers*. Answers, n.d. Web. 03 Jan. 2014.

⁶ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/boycott> "Boycott." *The Free Dictionary*. Farlex, n.d. Web. 03 Jan. 2014.

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<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/europe/russia/130813/sochi-games-gay-rights-boycott-calls-unique-olympic-histo> "Sochi Games Gay Rights Boycott Calls Unique in Olympic History." *GlobalPost*. GlobalPost, 13 Aug. 2013. Web. 07 Dec. 2013.

⁸ <http://www.humanrights.com/what-are-human-rights/universal-declaration-of-human-rights.html> "UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights: United for Human Rights." *UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights: United for Human*

international events are still marred by human rights violations.

Mexico City Olympics 1968

⁹Merely ten days before the start of the games, a large student movement took place in response to an earlier, violent attack by riot police towards a local street fight between high school students. In response, government troops open fired on the students on the streets of Mexico city, causing the Tlatelolco massacre with civilian casualties ranging from a mere four to three thousand.¹⁰ However, despite the Mexican government's clear violation of the human rights, no country boycotted the Games.¹¹



Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 1 Police and soldiers rounding up students, human rights activists believed that many died of disease, violence and malnutrition. In fact, many may still be imprisoned till today.

Beijing Olympics 2008

Rather than using the Olympic games as an opportunity to improve its human rights situation, China has been accused of restricting human rights instead. The UK campaigns director of Amnesty International, Tim Hancock, says that ‘the Olympic values have been betrayed by the Chinese government’. Indeed, the Chinese government had imprisoned several peaceful activists without trial as well as heightened censorship by restricting what journalist reports.¹²

Qatar World Cup 2022

Rights. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, n.d. Web. 06 Dec. 2013.

⁹ <http://crosstalk.kinja.com/los-olvidados-the-government-sanctioned-massacre-at-tl-1441243357> "Los Olvidados: The Government-Sanctioned Massacre at Tlatelolco, 1968, and Why You Don't (& Should) Know About It. (NSFW)." *Crosstalk*. Crosstalk, 04 Oct. 2013. Web. 07 Dec. 2013.

¹⁰ <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=97546687> Richman, Joe, and Anayansi Diaz-Cortes. "Mexico's 1968 Massacre: What Really Happened?" *Npr*. National Public Radio, 01 Dec. 2008. Web. 07 Dec. 2013.

¹¹ <http://theconversation.com/human-rights-and-the-olympics-games-of-freedom-or-oppression-8287> Joseph, Sarah. "Human Rights and the Olympics: Games of Freedom Or oppression?" *The Conversation*. The Conversation, 24 July 2012. Web. 07 Dec. 2013.

¹² <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/olympics/2469078/Beijing-Olympics-Human-rights-abuses-getting-worse.html> Spencer, Richard. "Beijing Olympics; Human Rights Abuses Getting Worse." *The Telegraph*. Telegraph Media Group, 29 July 2008. Web. 07 Dec. 2013.

Ever since Qatar was chosen to host the 2022 World cup, questions have been raised regarding Qatar's illegalization of homosexuality and its stance on women's rights, in fact, in 2009, over 18 people have been flogged for being homosexuals. Sepp Blatter, the president of FIFA, in response to Qatar's laws against homosexuals jokingly answered that 'homosexuals should refrain from sexual activities' which consequently stirred anger from the wider community in regards to his insensitivity.¹³

Key Issues

Human Rights are a major concern for countries hosting and participating in international events for several reasons. These issues include the threat to international peace and diplomacy, the safety of participants and the domestic human rights problems within the host countries.

Threat to international peace and diplomacy

Human rights conflicts, although generally internal, have the potential to spill over borders and thus endangering the security of other bordering nations.¹⁴ For example, the Syrian conflict that involved human rights violations such as government prevention of humanitarian assistance to civilians in besieged areas within Syria¹⁵ has spilled over into Turkey and Lebanon, wounding refugees and killing a cameraman respectively.¹⁶ Furthermore, boycotts of Olympic games may result in worsening international relations as countries may boycott the original boycotter's games in retaliation (e.g.: The US boycott of the Moscow 1980 games led to a Soviet boycott of the Los Angeles 1984 games)¹⁷

¹³ <http://www.theguardian.com/football/2010/dec/14/fifa-boss-gay-fans-no-sex> Gibson, Owen. "Fifa Boss Tells Gay Fans: 'Don't Have Sex at Qatar World Cup'" *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 15 Dec. 2010. Web. 07 Dec. 2013.

¹⁴ <http://www.un.org/rights/HRToday/hrconfl.htm> "Human Rights and Conflicts." *UN News Center*. UN, n.d. Web. 06 Dec. 2013.

¹⁵ <http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/12/03/syria-aid-besieged-areas-being-blocked> "Syria: Aid to Besieged Areas Being Blocked | Human Rights Watch." *Syria: Aid to Besieged Areas Being Blocked | Human Rights Watch*. Human Rights Watch, 3 Dec. 2013. Web. 05 Dec. 2013.

¹⁶ <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/syria-conflict-spills-borders-journalist-lebanon-killed-5-turkey-refugee-camp-wounded-article-1.1058597> "Syria Conflict Spills over Two Borders: Journalist in Lebanon Killed, 5 in Turkey Refugee Camp Wounded." *NY Daily News*. NY Daily News, 9 Apr. 2012. Web. 07 Dec. 2013.

¹⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1980_Summer_Olympics_boycott "1980 Summer Olympics Boycott." *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, 12 May 2013. Web. 07 Dec. 2013.

Safety of participants

Clearly, countries with poor human rights records mean that they are a threat to security. Indeed, the Iranian Revolution of 1978-1979, which involved several human rights abuses such as torture and restriction of expression, cancelled international events planned to be hosted there such as the 15th World Scout Jamboree.¹⁸

Raising awareness of domestic human rights issues

Many activists have used international events as a way to raise awareness and ameliorate the host country's human rights abuses. Recently human rights activists have used the wide news coverage China was receiving during the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games to urge progression towards eliminating the death penalty. However, Amnesty International has pointed out that the Games have somewhat worsened China's human rights records as peaceful activists were arrested and journalists were restricted in reporting in order to prevent disruption of the Games.¹⁹

To what extent politics should get involved

Indeed international events are always mired with political and economic undertones, with countries using these events to advertise themselves to the rest of the world (e.g.: 1936 Berlin Olympics was used by Hitler to show the positive side of Nazi Germany) yet many have argued that these events, especially one such as the Olympic Games, are no place for politics and instead, are for the athletes.²⁰

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

China

As previously stated, the 2008 Olympic games has exposed China's poor human

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<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/feature-stories/human-rights-violations-persist-iran-30-years-islamic-revolution-20090209> "News." *Human Rights Violations Persist in Iran 30 Years after Islamic Revolution*. Amnesty International, 9 Feb. 2009. Web. 07 Dec. 2013.

¹⁹ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/olympics/2469078/Beijing-Olympics-Human-rights-abuses-getting-worse.html> Spencer, Richard. "Beijing Olympics; Human Rights Abuses Getting Worse." *The Telegraph*. Telegraph Media Group, 29 July 2008. Web. 07 Dec. 2013.

²⁰ <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007087> "The Movement to Boycott the Berlin Olympics of 1936." *Holocaust Encyclopedia*. Holocaust Encyclopedia, n.d. Web. 7 Dec. 2013.

rights records. Despite this, the number of human rights abuses has only risen in China. To add to this, back in 2007-2008, some have argued to boycott the Beijing Olympics due to China's support of the Darfur Genocide in Iran²¹ However ultimately, there was a lack of complaint, likely due to China's importance to the global economy.²²

Qatar

Qatar's position as host of the 2022 world cup has been questioned in regards to its stance against homosexuality.²³

Russia

²⁴The 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics in Russia have been drawing a lot more controversy than usual with many demanding a boycott of the Games in regards to Russia's intolerant stance on gay rights.²⁵ Russia's recent anti-gay legislation is considered a clear violation of the Olympic Charter.²⁶



²¹ [http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/05/sports/olympics/05boycott.html](#) Kristof, Nicholas D.

"More on Boycotting the Chinese Olympics." *Nicholas D Kristof More on Boycotting the Chinese Olympics Comments*. The New York Times, 5 Feb. 2007. Web. 07 Dec. 2013.

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<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/europe/russia/130813/sochi-games-gay-rights-boycott-calls-unique-olympic-histo> "Sochi Games Gay Rights Boycott Calls Unique in Olympic History." *GlobalPost*. GlobalPost, 13 Aug. 2013. Web. 07 Dec. 2013.

²³ <http://www.theguardian.com/football/2010/dec/14/fifa-boss-gay-fans-no-sex> Gibson, Owen. "Fifa Boss Tells Gay Fans: 'Don't Have Sex at Qatar World Cup'" *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 15 Dec. 2010. Web. 07 Dec. 2013.

²⁴ <http://www.usmmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007087> "The Movement to Boycott the Berlin Olympics of 1936." *Holocaust Encyclopedia*. Holocaust Encyclopedia, n.d. Web. 7 Dec. 2013.

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<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/europe/russia/130813/sochi-games-gay-rights-boycott-calls-unique-olympic-histo> "Sochi Games Gay Rights Boycott Calls Unique in Olympic History." *GlobalPost*. GlobalPost, 13 Aug. 2013. Web. 07 Dec. 2013.

²⁶ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/slava-mogutin/the-case-for-boycotting-the-2014-winter-olympics_b_3787006.html Mogutin, Slava. "The Case for Boycotting the 2014 Winter Olympics." *The Huffington Post*. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 20 Aug. 2013. Web. 07 Dec. 2013.

USA

The USA seems to be the nation most active in boycotting the Russian Winter Olympics. Many have argued that a boycott of the 2014 Games is necessary in order to prevent a similar repetition of the 1936 Olympics in Berlin; in which the USA rejected a boycott and thus, a failure to stand against the Nazi anti-Semitic policies of not allowing Jews to participate in the German team meant a missed chance in strengthening the international resistance against the Nazi regime.²⁷

Timeline of Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

The following is a timeline of past UN resolutions regarding human rights situation in sports events

Date	Description of event
1936	<i>Olympic Games, Berlin</i> – Nazi racism led to threats of a boycott from many countries including the USA as the Nazis have broken Olympic rules of forbidding discrimination. However, this was ultimately abandoned as the head of the American Olympic Committee, Avery Brundage, argued that the Olympic Games ‘belong to the athletes and not to the politicians’. ²⁸
1980	<i>Olympic Games, Moscow</i> – This time, over 45 nations led by the USA boycotted the Games in protest to the Soviet Union’s invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. However, this merely resulted in worsening international relations as the following 1984 Los Angeles Olympics was met by a retaliating boycott by the Soviet Union. ²⁹

²⁷ <http://www.startribune.com/opinion/commentaries/229175661.html> Kennedy, Ellen J. "Commentaries." *U.S. Must Boycott the Winter Olympics*. StarTribune, n.d. Web. 07 Dec. 2013.

²⁸ <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007087> "The Movement to Boycott the Berlin Olympics of 1936." *Holocaust Encyclopedia*. Holocaust Encyclopedia, n.d. Web. 7 Dec. 2013.

²⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1980_Summer_Olympics_boycott "1980 Summer Olympics Boycott." *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, 12 May 2013. Web. 07 Dec. 2013.

2008	<p><i>Olympic Games, Beijing</i> – China came under protest as Human Rights activists pointed out China’s increase in human rights violations in order to prevent interferences during the Olympic Games and many demanded a boycott due to China’s involvement in the Darfur Genocide.³⁰</p>
March 26 th , 2010	<p><i>world of sports free from racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance</i>³¹ - A resolution passed in context to the approaching 2010 FIFA world cup in South Africa. The resolution aimed to combat racism crimes in the context of sporting events and to make sure they are punished if committed, by the appropriate law.³²</p>
March 25 th , 2011	<p><i>Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem</i>³³ – Specifically Article 10, the article demands that despite Israeli occupation of Palestine, Israel must respect the sports principles as dictated by the Charter of the International Olympic Committee. Therefore, Israel is not allowed to hinder the construction of sports facilities and access of donated sports equipments. Also, the article insists on giving Palestinian athletes equal opportunities to sport and ensuring the safety of international teams and sports figures into occupied Palestinian territory.</p>
September 28 th , 2011	<p><i>Promoting awareness, understanding and the application of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights through sport and the Olympic ideal</i>³⁴ – A resolution discussing the relationship between</p>

³⁰ http://kristof.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/02/05/more-on-boycotting-the-chinese-olympics/?_r=0 Kristof, Nicholas D. "More on Boycotting the Chinese Olympics." *Nicholas D Kristof More on Boycotting the Chinese Olympics Comments*. The New York Times, 5 Feb. 2007. Web. 07 Dec. 2013.

³¹ http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/sport/shared/sport/pdfs/Resolutions/A-HRC-RES-13-27/A-HRC-RES-13-27_EN.pdf *Human Rights Council*. Proc. of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Forms of Intolerance, Follow-up to and Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. United Nations, 15 Apr. 2010. Web. 7 Dec. 2013.

³² <http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/sport/home/resourcecenter/resolutions/pid/19433> "United Nations Sport for Development and Peace - Human Rights Council." *UN News Center*. UN, n.d. Web. 07 Dec. 2013.

³³ http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/sport/shared/sport/pdfs/Resolutions/A_HRC_RES_16_29/A-HRC-RES-16-29_EN.pdf *Human Rights Situation in Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territories*. Proc. of Human Rights Council. United Nations, 13 Apr. 2011. Web. 7 Dec. 2013.

³⁴ http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/sport/shared/sport/pdfs/Resolutions/A_HRC_RES_18_23/A-HRC-RES-18-23_EN.pdf

	the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and major sporting events, specifically the Olympic and Paralympic games. The resolution aims to recognize that major international sports events can be used to promote human rights through acts such as fair play and tolerance and that these events must give equal opportunities for all people regardless of status such as race, gender and disability.
May 31, 2013	<i>FIFA anti-discriminatory rules</i> – States that teams could be relegated or expelled if there was any serious case of racism during the games. ³⁵
2022	<i>FIFA World cup Qatar</i> ³⁶ - As mentioned previously, many have questioned Qatar’s privilege of host of the World Cup especially when Qatar has laws that forbids homosexuality. ³⁷

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Despite several motions by the UN and other groups such as Amnesty International and FIFA, ultimately, attempts to prevent countries with poor human rights records to host international events through movements such as boycotts, treaties and protests have proven unsuccessful. For example, the 1980 Moscow Olympics boycott had practically no impact on the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as the Cold War continued. Furthermore, many countries have been unwilling to ban countries from participating or hosting in International events in fear of worsening international relations and consequently, worsening economic relations (such as China for the 2008 Olympics).

Possible Solutions

It seems that there are two main solutions to this issue; firstly, countries may be encouraged to push for collective security and cooperate in order to fight against the human rights issues of a country hosting international events. However, this may be a difficult task as past examples of

^{df} *Promoting Awareness, Understanding and the Application of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights through Sport and the Olympic Ideal*. Proc. of Human Rights Council. United Nations, 17 Oct. 2011. Web. 7 Dec. 2013.

³⁵ <http://www.bbc.com/sport/0/football/22728162> "Fifa Racism Measures Could See Teams Expelled or Relegated." *BBC Sport*. BBC, n.d. Web.

³⁶ <http://www.fifa.com/worldcup/qatar2022/> "2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar™." *FIFA.com*. N.p., n.d. Web. 04 Dec. 2013.

³⁷ <http://www.theguardian.com/football/2010/dec/14/fifa-boss-gay-fans-no-sex> Gibson, Owen. "Fifa Boss Tells Gay Fans: 'Don't Have Sex at Qatar World Cup'" *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 15 Dec. 2010. Web. 07 Dec. 2013.

collective boycotting have proven ineffectual.³⁸

On the other hand, nations may choose to leave politics and economics out of international events such as the Olympics. Indeed, many have argued that attempts at turning these events into a political stage mean little and rarely have an impact on the actual course of the event.³⁹

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³⁸ <http://www.policymic.com/articles/59431/olympic-boycotts-have-a-long-history-and-they-almost-never-work> George, Rachel. "Olympic Boycotts Have a Long History - And They Almost Never Work." *PolicyMic*. PolicyMic, 13 Aug. 2013. Web. 06 Dec. 2013.

³⁹ IBID

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