

# PETER GIBSON MP



## HOUSE OF COMMONS LONDON SW1A 0AA

August 2021

*Dear ConAvents*

Thank you for your email about the 2022 winter Olympic games.

While I was unable to attend the Westminster Hall debate, I made sure to follow proceedings closely, and I pay tribute to all MPs who spoke in the debate.

While Ministers have not yet decided whether the UK Government will attend the winter Olympics in Beijing, I am glad that they have reassured parliamentarians on steps they are taking to raise their concerns with Chinese officials.

The Government have consistently been clear about our serious concerns about the human rights situation in Xinjiang. In response, they have taken robust action. They have led international efforts to hold China to account for the gross human rights violations in Xinjiang. Ministers have already imposed sanctions on those responsible and have announced a package of robust domestic measures to help to ensure that no British organisations are complicit, including through their supply chains.

I am glad that the Foreign Secretary has consistently raised our concerns directly with Chinese State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, most recently at the end of May. He has also, on 22 March, announced asset freezes and travel bans under our global human rights sanctions regime against four Chinese Government officials and one entity, who Ministers believe are responsible for the gross human rights violations in Xinjiang. Importantly, those measures were co-ordinated alongside sanctions from the United States, Canada and the European Union.

I believe that those actions send a clear message to the Chinese Government that the international community will not turn a blind eye to such serious and systematic violations of basic human rights. It speaks for itself that, 30 countries were united in sanctioning those responsible for the violations.

As the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary have made clear, China's attempts to silence those highlighting human rights violations at home and abroad, including its targeting of members of our parliament in the UK, are completely unwarranted and unacceptable. The freedom to speak out in opposition to human rights violations is fundamental, and I stand firm with all those who have been sanctioned.

*Member of Parliament for Darlington*

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This Government has also consistently taken a leading international role in holding China to account, and we have used our diplomatic influence to raise the issue up the international agenda. On 22 June, a global UK diplomatic effort helped to deliver the support of 44 countries for a joint statement at the UN Human Rights Council. That underlined our shared concerns and called on China to grant unfettered access to the region for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Finally, in regards to a complete boycott, as I hope you will appreciate, the participation of Team GB at the Olympics and Paralympics is a matter for the British Olympic Association and the British Paralympic Association. They operate independently of Government, as is absolutely right, and as is also required by International Olympic Committee regulations.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

Yours Sincerely  
Peter Gibson

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