

## OPEN LETTER REGARDING THE IOC AND PENG SHUAI

To the attention of the International Olympic Committee

- President Thomas Bach
- Chair IOC Athletes' Commission, Emma Terho
- IOC Executive Committee

December 2, 2021

Dear IOC, President Bach, Chair Terho,

With the NGO Safeguard Defenders, I have been paying very close attention to the worrying situation of Peng Shuai in the People's Republic of China. Peng has been disappeared, at least temporarily, only to appear in a series of ever-stranger and rather obviously staged appearances. This practice is eerily similar to a recurrent CCP tactic of stage-managed (TV) appearances, where victims are paraded and forced to perform by the police, often in an effort to counter international criticism.

While you may not have been fully aware of this practice at the outset of Peng's disappearance, the behaviour of the IOC **has taken a serious turn for the worse** following your December 2 press release on a second closed-door video-call with Peng.

Contrary to your latest statements, the actions of the IOC are directly putting Peng at greater risk. If this continued error is indeed due to ignorance, this open letter will at least be one step to remedy such lack of knowledge, information, and understanding.

The practice of stage-managed appearances is most often referred to as forced televised confessions, though recently PRC police will more often resort to posting such videos on their social media channels or have newspapers carry them on their websites. In every scenario, the purpose remains the same: to either attack the person her- or himself, or to counter international criticism.

Safeguard Defenders is without a doubt among the world's premier authorities on the PRC's practice of forced TV confessions and the system for disappearances often employed to "prepare" the victims for their "performance" (RSDL - Residential Surveillance at a Designated Location). We therefore feel it is our duty to address some of the issues related to Peng's situation and the IOC's actions. As I have personally been through both of these experiences – disappearance in RSDL and subsequently forced into a scripted, stage-managed, public appearance – strengthens me in my belief I should write you this letter.

**Peng is not free.** You know - or should know - that she is not free. You have seen the initial letter claiming to be from her – where she retracts the allegations of rape against former high level CCP cadre and State leader Zhang Gaoli. If she is not under control by the police, why in the world would she do that? Her first "re-appearances" in a restaurant and claimed meetings with friends have been dissected and shown to be ludicrous at best.

At every development of international criticism, **like clockwork**, Peng has either magically appeared or someone has provided something claiming to be from her to counter such criticism.

As said, at the outset, doing the bidding of the Chinese State and Police might have been forgivable due to lack of awareness, as with [your first publicized video call](#). However, the following and widespread criticism of your actions means there is simply no way that you are not aware of how wrong your actions were. **Yet now you have engaged in it again.**

Meanwhile, the WTA, however, has not been given a chance to speak with her, and certainly not in a non-coercive setting. Do you ever wonder why they are refusing the WTA, and instead reach out to you for this? Shouldn't this alone be a warning sign on your end?

Sometimes a picture can tell a thousand words. Lacking such a picture, here is instead a drawing and architectural sketch of when I was forced to appear on the PRC TV myself, claiming I was being treated well. Exactly as in Peng's case, this staged appearance was used to counter international criticism over my disappearance.



All those people, except for the CCTV journalist and cameraman right in front of me, are Chinese agents of the Ministry of State Security (MSS). They wrote, produced, and directed the entire farce. The viewer - people like you - would, of course, only see my face on TV "speaking freely" about how well I was being treated, and how no one should worry about me at all. Like with Peng, [as you stated](#), and I'm quoting you, I "appeared safe and well".

Frankly, my own experience is nothing. I personally know some 20 people who have gone through the same thing. Most of them are Chinese nationals and compared to them I was treated with kid gloves. Below is a screenshot from an interview aired with famed lawyer Wang Yu. Looks quite natural and nice doesn't it?



Like me, she was disappeared in RSDL without being arrested. She suffered through months and months of physical- and mental torture, as did her husband. They both refused to make one of these

scripted appearances. So the police went after their teenage son instead. The picture above is the result of that: finally giving in to the threats made to their son, she appeared “safe and well”, as you put it in Peng’s case.

If rather than imparting lessons to the rest of the world on what you believe may work, you may want to learn about the reality of what happens behind the scenes of these appearances, which you can do from our frequently cited report on the subject: [Scripted and Staged](#). More detailed testimonies from a wide variety of victims of this practice are available in a book released on the subject: [Trial By Media](#).

I do warn you; these testimonies are not easy reading: various forms of torture are employed, and - when torture alone does not work though meted out over a period of six months – you will read how relatives, children, and siblings are being attacked or detained instead.



Above you see an artist rendering about one of several videos British citizen Peter Humphrey was forced to record. He was drugged before his own first appearance. He was later denied medical care in detention and almost died.

If you need to learn more, there is an entire PhD thesis just out now on the linguistics used in these stage-managed appearances, which can be read about [here](#).

Now I realize the IOC is, by design, a **non-political organ**. I also realize your highest goal, each and every time, is to put on a successful Olympic Games. However, you must also realize that regardless of your stance that you are non-political, the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese State is using you and the Olympics **for political purposes**. By allowing yourself to be used in such a blatant manner, you are indeed acting politically – which is what you say you will always refuse to do. Frankly, your choices make little sense.

If you are indeed non-political then **immediately refuse the CCP’s requests to help them counter international criticism**. Refuse to engage on their behalf, and let them do it themselves. Limit

yourself to pushing for her safe release, support the WTA wholeheartedly, and ensure that Beijing lives up to its promises made to host the 2022 Olympics.

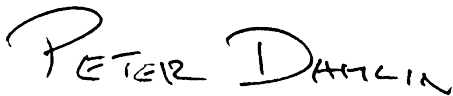
Finally, about your actions putting her in greater, not lesser, danger? During my ten years or so in Beijing I would, among many other things, conduct what you might call exit interviews. That is: we would talk to people released from detention, arrest, or imprisonment, and we would ask about how their treatment changed with media- or diplomatic attention. Guess what? Every single person we have ever spoken to said the same thing; it improves, often significantly, with more attention.

Quiet diplomacy may have its place, but it is not here. And you yourself obviously do not believe in it, because if you did, **why are you hyping these video calls with Peng** – especially since you **refuse to release them**. Is someone perhaps telling you that you cannot release them?

At the very least educate yourself on the issue of enforced disappearance and stage-managed confessions and appearances. There are numerous victims of both issues, some in China, some outside, some Chinese, some foreigners, **willing to speak to you**. I would be happy to **arrange a roundtable discussion on the topic for you**, so you can avoid these mistakes in the future.

I will continue to hope - granting you the benefit of doubt - that the actions so far undertaken by the IOC stem from a profound lack of information and awareness, and not that the IOC is intentionally carrying out the CCP's propaganda for them. If you are indeed non-political, stop being the CCP's political tool.

Peter Dahlin

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "PETER DAHLIN". The letters are written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Madrid, Spain

2021-12-02