



Shortlist 2010

Public Eye Swiss Award

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**Nominated for the Public Eye Swiss Award 2010
by the Olympic Resistance Network:**

International Olympic Committee

Headquarters: Lausanne, Switzerland
Sector: Sport governing body
Revenue and profit: 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing: US \$2,15 billion revenue, 126 million profit
Präsident: Jacques Rogge

In Brief

Corporate manners under the guise of an association: The Lausanne-based International Olympic Committee (IOC) is a globe-encompassing organization – with a holding structure quite similar to a large corporation – that possesses tremendous power and wealth. With the awarding of the 2010 Winter Games to Vancouver, Canada, the IOC is causing the displacement of a large part of the indigenous population around the venue, because the Games will be held on Indian lands whose title was never ceded. This has devastating consequences for man and environment: Vast areas of virgin landscapes and wild animal retreats were sacrificed for the expansion or construction of freeways, winter sports centers and other infrastructure. Homelessness in the Vancouver region, particularly among First Nations peoples, has tripled since the awarding of the Games. It is reprehensible that global corporations earn millions on the Games while social promises to local residents are broken. The affected peoples will be left to their own devices in their ghettos and on their reservations.

Irresponsible Corporate Behavior

The 2010 Olympic Winter Games will be held on Indian lands. The IOC did not find it necessary to discuss the land issue with the indigenous peoples, neither before nor after the awarding of the Games to Vancouver. Canada is one of only four countries that did not sign the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007. The IOC's observer status at the UN obliges it to oppose any form of human rights violations, including this one.

Instead, the IOC deliberately divided the First Nations into sides for and against the Olympic Games, by enticing four local indigenous groups with large sums. These so-called "Four Host First Nations" should serve as athletes, volunteers, exhibitors, presenting artists and spectators. But the tribes being paid have only 5,000 to 6,000 members, while the indigenous communities directly affected by the Games account for over 65,000 people.

Consequences

The Winter Games in Vancouver are a threat to the Indian peoples of the First Nations, for the poor population of the urban agglomeration, and for the environment. While social services, health benefits and education spending are cut, the regional government of British Columbia provides billions of dollars for construction firms and other industries. Since the awarding of the Games, over 850 low-income housing units have disappeared, and homelessness has tripled. Promises to construct subsidized housing have been broken. Today Vancouver is the city with the highest homeless rate in North America. Thirty percent of the homeless are indigenous, although they make up a mere two percent of the overall population in the province.

This explains why the largest security operation in Canada's history is being organized. A total of 12,500 police, military and members of private security firms will be on duty – for a sporting event, mind you, that should be in the spirit of peace. These security forces regard the indigenous as potential troublemakers and make regular appearances in the Indian communities and on reservations, in order to intimidate individuals, families and communities.

The Vancouver Organizing Committee (VANOC) promises the greenest Olympic Games ever. In the process, unspoiled valleys were opened up and roughly 100,000 old-growth trees were felled, without compensating the rightful owners. In addition, roads were built or extended into virgin land and untold hectares of forest were destroyed to build a freeway. As a result, bear retreats and salmon spawning grounds were destroyed, which in turn threatens the livelihoods of the First Nations.

Current Status and Demands

It is within the power of the IOC to restore the original spirit of the Olympic Games to promote peace and connect peoples. If a permanent location for the Summer and Winter Games could be found, sport could once again take center stage, instead of all other aspects of economic interests along with their negative impacts.

Further Information

- <http://www.no2010.com>
- <http://olympicresistance.net/>