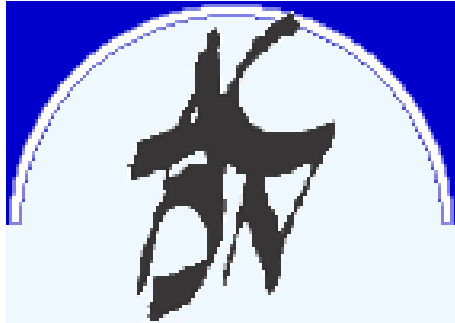


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# Open Letter to the President of the French Republic

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## Open Letter to the President of the French Republic

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Mr President,

The ancient Greeks suspended all warring between themselves for the duration of the Olympic Games. To respect the Olympic Spirit, we must do the same.

In those days, the Games lasted only five days. But the truce lasted a month before and a month after, to enable all the athletes to travel to and from Olympia. So, since the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games will take place from 26 July to 8 September, all wars should be suspended for at least from 14 July to 15 September 2024 - and why not as from now!

This truce, extended if necessary, will be used by all the States represented at the Olympics to lay the foundations for a lasting global peace, based on justice and respect for international law.

With Russia still at war with Ukraine, the IOC could allow its athletes to compete under its flag, if it ceases fire and agrees to negotiate the terms of its return to the recognized borders of Ukraine, which it pledged to respect, and its political sovereignty, by the Budapest Memorandum of 5 December 1994. This respect being the rule does not exclude that the fate of Crimea can be decided by its population via a referendum under control of the UN or the OSCE, nor that the status of Donbass is the subject of a negotiated agreement. On both sides, civilians and soldiers will appreciate this respite granted to their lives, especially as it could become definitive.

In the Near East, after an urgent ceasefire that can no longer wait, a just and lasting peace must be negotiated between Israel and the Palestinians - who will need to have a delegation at the Olympics despite the hundred or more high-level Palestinian athletes killed in the bombing of Gaza.

Wherever war rages, it must be suspended and its motives resolved diplomatically.

This time of peace must also be seized by nuclear weapons states to begin negotiating the complete elimination of these weapons. The five permanent members of the UN Security Council -the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France and China- are obliged to do so by Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), that remained unapplied since 1970. The four other states with these weapons -Israel, India, Pakistan, North Korea- will have to be involved in the negotiations, as well as the six countries that host them (American in Belgium, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Turkey, Russian in Belarus).

These weapons, "fundamentally dangerous, extraordinarily expensive, militarily ineffective and morally indefensible" according to US General Lee Butler, former head of the Strategic Air Command, are weapons of crime against humanity, contrary to the Geneva Conventions, to International Humanitarian Law, and to the United Nations Charter. At the opposite pole from the Olympic ideal, they offer nations the example of the worst violence: the threat of massacres. They are claimed to be a means of preventing wars (which they clearly do not do), but are in fact a means of imposing the domination of countries that have them over those that do not.

They also represent a huge waste at a time when humanity needs to devote all its strength to face the terrible challenges of the present time, social, human and environmental, especially climate change.

According to the IOC Charter, "The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity".

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That is why we call on athletes, the Olympic Committee, the spectators of the Paris Olympics and all those who love peace and humanity to unite to demand leaders from around the world:

- ▶ the cessation of all ongoing wars,
- ▶ the opening of negotiations between the parties in conflict, with a view to achieving a just and lasting peace,
- ▶ the end of the arms race and the planned elimination of all nuclear weapons.

Protect life, demand peace!

Cease fire! Stop the massacres! Stop the wars!

Yes to an Olympic Truce!

Jean-Marie Matagne

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