

Spielberg pulls out of Olympics; British athletes' gag reconsidered

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(Reuters; Guardian; BR) The Beijing Olympics have suffered a PR blow in the run up to this summer's games after film director Steven Spielberg withdrew from his role as an artistic adviser in protest over China's policy on the conflict in Sudan's Darfur region. Spielberg's announcement has attracted widespread press coverage, drawing attention to China and the Darfur crisis. His decision could lead others involved in the Games to pull out or reconsider their roles. Human rights campaigners have accused China of being partly responsible for Darfur's chaos because of its unstinting diplomatic backing for the Sudanese government. Prior to this, British Olympic officials insisted that there is no intention to gag athletes from making political comment in China during the Games. The statement came after reports claimed UK athletes were being asked to sign contracts that would have prohibited them from taking part in "*political demonstrations or propaganda*". But the British Olympic Association (BOA) has said it will now look again at the wording of the draft agreement.

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