

Olympic torch lit despite protest

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(BBC) The Olympic torch has been lit at a ceremony in Greece that was briefly disrupted by pro-Tibet activists. Protesters from media rights group Reporters Sans Frontieres (RSF) [Reporters Without Borders] broke through the cordon of 1,000 police officers in Olympia as China's envoy spoke. Activists had vowed to protest over the violence in and around Tibet. The torch will now be carried in an around-the-world relay through 20 countries, before arriving in Beijing for the start of the Games on 08 August. As Liu Qi, head of the Beijing Olympic organising committee, spoke ahead of the torch lighting, three men broke into the ceremony venue. One ran up behind him attempting to display a black flag depicting the Olympic rings made from handcuffs. The men were from RSF, which has called for a boycott of the opening ceremony of the games. They were quickly bundled away by police and Mr Liu continued his speech uninterrupted. The live television coverage, beaming the scene around the world, quickly cut away from Mr Liu and the protesters until they had been removed. Later, as the torch began its journey, pro-Tibet activists unfurled banners and shouted slogans before Greek security wrestled them away. The head of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Jacques Rogge, has defended the decision to hold the Games in China saying: "*The major political leaders don't want a boycott*".

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