

International Olympic Committee (IOC)
Mr. Jacques Rogge, CEO
Chateau de Vidy
1007 Lausanne

Zürich, November 19th, 2009

Open Letter Re: Treatment of Intersexed Athletes

Dear Mr. Rogge

Dear Members of the IOC Board

Zwischengeschlecht.org is a human rights advocacy group dedicated to fully implement human rights also for people born with „ambiguous“ physical sex markers, a.k.a. intersexed persons or hermaphrodites. While our first goal is to end the current medical practice of forced genital surgeries on intersexed children, we are also very concerned about the discriminating, unfair and harmful treatment of (suspected) intersexed athletes both by the IOC and the IAAF and their affiliates.

While we understand and endorse the legitimate concerns that intersexed athletes with an unfair physical advantage shouldn't be allowed to compete with „regular“ female athletes, we also feel strongly that those intersexed athletes who do not have any unjust advantages should have the right to enter female competitions without fear of being excluded „on suspicion“ and without due process.

Unfortunately, to our understanding at the moment both the IOC and the IAAF still have no transparent, fair and internationally binding ground rules concerning the participation of intersexed athletes. In contrary, arbitrary exclusions based on inapted and intransparent „sex tests“, sometimes consisting of a barr body test or a hormonal analysis only, are still widespread.

Even worse, leaks of confidential medical informations to the press seem to act as a standard compliance tool in order to keep „dubious“ athletes from competing, and athletes from „developing countries“ seem to be treated especially inconsiderately.

In the case of Santhi Soundarajan, to our understanding all of this applies. The negative consequences of this intolerable, inhumane and demeaning treatment for the athlete concerned are also well documented.

We therefore would like to appeal to you as the parent organisation to assess and implement your possibilities to redeem this intolerable situation.

While we appreciate that the IOC currently is undertaking steps to determine rules and regulations for intersexed athletes, we are very concerned that the IOC seems to unevenly rely on medical expertise, despite the fact that if in doubt (e.g. in about 50% of intersexed persons with XY caryotype) medical experts traditionally advocate surgery which proved to be often actually harmful, and also ethically and legally unsound.

We therefore would like to appeal to you to also appropriately consult persons concerned and their organisations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Looking forward to your reply,

Kind regards

Daniela Truffer / Zwischengeschlecht.org