



INTERNATIONAL
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEE

FACTSHEET OLYMPIC TRUCE UPDATE - DECEMBER 2015

MISSION

“The goal of Olympism is to place everywhere sport at the service of the harmonious development of man, with a view to encouraging the establishment of a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity.” (Fundamental Principles 2, [Olympic Charter 2015](#)).

In this third millennium, the IOC is more convinced than ever of the positive role that sport can, and must, play as a catalyst in our society. It unites and teaches about respect and tolerance, two values that are essential in today's world.

THE SACRED TRUCE IN ANTIQUITY

The tradition of the “Olympic Truce” or “Ekecheiria” was established in Ancient Greece in the 9th century B.C. by the signature of a treaty between three kings: Iphitos of Elis, Cleosthenes of Pisa and Lycurgus of Sparta.

Subsequently, all the other Greek cities ratified this “international agreement”, thanks to which permanent, recognised immunity of the sanctuary of Olympia and the region of Elis became a reality. During the Truce period, the athletes, artists and their families, as well as ordinary pilgrims, could travel in total safety to participate in or attend the Olympic Games and return afterwards to their respective countries. As the opening of the Games approached, the sacred truce was proclaimed and announced by the Spondophoroi, citizens of Elis who travelled throughout Greece to pass on the message. Proof that this Truce was respected is that, in Olympia, the Greeks never built walls to protect themselves, unlike all the other Greek cities.

THE SYMBOL

The Olympic Truce is symbolised by the dove of peace, with the traditional Olympic flame in the background. In a world plagued by wars and animosity, the peace-dove symbol represents one of the IOC's ideals and challenges: to build a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal. The Olympic flame has brought warm friendship to all the people of the world through sharing and togetherness. In the symbol, the flame is made up of colourful effervescent elements – evoking the joy experienced in the celebration of the human spirit. These elements represent people of all races coming together for the observance of the Truce.

THE REINTRODUCTION OF THE OLYMPIC TRUCE INTO THE MODERN GAMES

Taking into account the new political reality in which sport and the Olympic Games exist, the IOC decided to revive the concept of the Olympic Truce on the occasion of the Olympic Games, with a view to protecting, as far as possible, the interests of the athletes and sport in general, and to contribute to the search for peaceful and diplomatic solutions to the world's conflicts. The first Olympic Truce project was launched in 1991, following the break-up of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the creation of the United Nations (UN) Security Council Sanctions Committee against this country, as a result of which, in 1992, its Resolution 757 included “sport” as a sanctioned element for the first time. After several consultations, the IOC, as a centennial institution, opted to reaffirm its independence, defend the athletes' interests, protect the Olympic Games and consolidate the unity of the Olympic Movement.

On the advice of the Executive Board, on 21 July 1992 the 99th IOC Session launched a call to all States, as well as all international and



national organisations, and asked the IOC President to start talks with the UN.

Finally, the UN Security Council Sanctions Committee and the IOC reached an agreement enabling the Yugoslav athletes to take part as individuals in the Games of the XXV Olympiad in 1992 in Barcelona.

MORE THAN 16 YEARS OF UNITED NATIONS SUPPORT

Since 1993, the UN General Assembly has repeatedly expressed its support for the IOC by unanimously adopting, every two years, a year before each edition of the Olympic Games, a resolution entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal". Through this (symbolic) resolution, the UN invites its member States to observe the Olympic Truce individually or collectively, and to seek, in conformity with the goals and principles of the United Nations Charter, the peaceful settling of all international conflicts through peaceful and diplomatic means, recognising the importance of the IOC's initiatives for human well-being and international understanding.

The 26th of October 2015, the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Resolution for observance of the Olympic Truce for the Games of the XXXI Olympiad in [Rio de Janeiro](#) in 2016: [Text of the Resolution](#)

Also, it has become a tradition that the UN, through its Secretary-General and its President of the General Assembly, calls upon its Member States to observe the traditional Olympic Truce during the Olympic Games.

THE OLYMPIC TRUCE DURING THE OLYMPIC GAMES

Based on the Fundamental Principles of the Olympic Charter, the Organising Committees for the Olympic Games are requested to carry out

various activities in the period **leading up to** and **during** the Games aiming to:

- promote peace, human understanding, community building through sport; and
- promote the concept of the Olympic Truce.

In Sydney, a soldier from the Timor Leste peacekeeping force and a UN volunteer took part in the Olympic Torch Relay. Also at the Opening Ceremony, the South and North Korean delegations paraded together under the flag of the Korean peninsula.

It has become a custom that athletes, government representatives as well as the Olympic Movement officials sign a Peace and Friendship Wall at the beginning of each Olympic Games during a ceremony dedicated to the Olympic Truce.

Organising Committees have continued to be innovative in the way they apply the Olympic Truce concept.

In Vancouver, the idea of having the Head of State as Patron of the Olympic Truce at an Olympic Games gave the concept its highest profile since it was reinstated in 1992. The Governor General of Canada was a perfect symbol of the Olympic Truce as she represented the diversity and richness of the Canadian culture, population, language and, most of all, tolerance.

In London, LOCOG and the UK Government have raised the bar in delivering Olympic Truce activities and have developed ever more sophisticated measures that are aimed at establishing lasting human development legacies.

In Sochi, the Olympic Truce was an important and consistent part of the Sochi 2014 education and culture programme. The Russian International Olympic University (RIOU), which opened its doors to students from across the world, was a symbolic incarnation of the Olympic Truce ideals.



THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC TRUCE FOUNDATION

In the framework of promoting peace through sport and the Olympic ideal, the IOC established an International Olympic Truce Foundation (IOTF) in July 2000. Its headquarters are in Lausanne, and it has a symbolic office in Olympia. The IOTF defines its actions around the following objectives:

- To promote the Olympic ideals to serve peace, friendship and understanding in the world, and in particular, to promote the ancient Greek tradition of the Olympic Truce;
- To initiate conflict prevention and resolution through sport, culture and the Olympic ideals, particularly by cooperating with all inter- and non-governmental organisations specialised in this field, by developing educational and research programmes, and by launching communications campaigns to promote the Olympic Truce.

The IOTF is administered by a Foundation Board composed of personalities from the world of sports and politics, and meets once a year (under the chairmanship of IOC & IOTF President).

To meet its objectives, the IOTF has established an International Olympic Truce Centre (IOTC), which is responsible for implementing projects related to the worldwide promotion of a culture of peace through sport and the Olympic ideal, in accordance with the principles and policies established by the Foundation. The Centre's main headquarters are in Athens, Greece.

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