



International
Olympic
Committee

The President

50th anniversary of the attack on the Israeli Olympic team at Munich 1972
Munich, 5 September 2022

5 September 1972 was the darkest day in Olympic history. What began so peacefully and joyfully ended in inconceivable suffering.

We share the pain of the relatives of the 11 Israeli victims and the German policeman. To this day, that barbaric attack fills us with horror, shame and disgust.

And yet our condolences can hardly ease the pain of the families who lost their son, brother, father, beloved spouse or love of their lives to this cowardly attack.

This pain is all the deeper because those loved ones lost their lives at the Olympic Games. They had so longed to take part in this peaceful competition with athletes from all over the world.

The meaning of the Olympic Games is the peaceful celebration of the unity of humankind in all our diversity, regardless of political or cultural differences. For this reason, this attack was also an attack on the Olympic Games and the Olympic values.

The minute of silence shared with hundreds of millions of people all over the world during the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 made this movingly clear.

Today, once more, we bow our heads as a mark of honour, tribute and deep respect for the victims.

We empathise with the relatives. We share their grief: the murdered members of the Israeli Olympic team were, are and will remain part of our Olympic community.

Despite this terrible loss, neither the relatives nor the National Olympic Committee of Israel turned their backs on the Games. Israeli athletes have in fact taken part in all subsequent Olympic Games.

My thanks therefore go especially to Ankie Spitzer, Ilana Romano and all the relatives, as well as to the National Olympic Committee of Israel, represented here by its President, Yael Arad. They have always extended their hands to us, making the dignified commemorations at Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020 possible. For this, we are forever grateful to them.

Rov todot Ankie, rov todot Ilana, rov todot family members, and rov todot NOC of Israel. Despite the pain you suffered, you did not turn your backs on the Olympic Movement. You always extended your hands, making the dignified moments of remembrance at Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020 for your loved ones possible. For this, we will always be grateful.

No ceremony can make us forget 50 years of grief, pain, doubt and uncertainty. Much has remained in the dark during this time for far too long. We must not allow this darkness to be followed by amnesia and indifference.

We therefore welcome the fact that an independent commission is to shed full light on the darkness surrounding the actions of state agencies. If we can in any way contribute to this clarification with information, we shall do so.

The Olympic Games unite the entire world in peaceful competition. That is why our commemoration ceremony today has an even deeper meaning:

We stand together, united in our remembrance, but also in our commitment to the peace mission of the Olympic Games. In this way, we show that the values of human solidarity and peace are stronger than all the forces of hatred and division.