

## **Equal Rights for All People**

All men were created equal. I, like the founding fathers of my nation, believe this statement to be undeniably true. People may not have the same talents or the same opportunities, they may not look the same or speak the same language, but they are all equal in the sense that everyone is entitled to a life filled with freedom and respect for their rights as human beings and as individuals.

So why do nations all over the world continue to deny their citizens this right to a free and happy life? Even in the rapidly developing country of China, human rights is an issue that continues to remain problematic despite efforts from the United States and United Nations. Perhaps the most glaring abuse of human rights by the Chinese government occurred during the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre, where 100,000 protesters, mostly students and intellectuals, gathered to protest the methods of the communist government. Although these citizens were simply practicing their rights to assemble and to free speech, the Chinese government did not recognize their rights and instead decided on using military action against the crowds of people. On June 4, a bloody massacre occurred, as soldiers fired at and killed hundreds of thousands of unarmed protestors. The Chinese government attempted to hide this fact. The international outcry from this incident was immense, and there was hope that China would learn from this tragic massacre.

Jump forward nearly 20 years, into the present day. China would be hosting the Olympics in Beijing in the summer of 2008. Expectations were high, and international human rights organizations were watching the event anxiously to see if China would do any better this time around. Although the Chinese government claimed to provide more freedoms for protesters and the press, ultimately not a single protest license was successfully issued, and many reporters covering anti-government protests or sentiments were arrested by police. In an effort to appear as an advanced and modern nation to spectators across the globe, the government further imposed restrictions on the poor people living in Beijing. They even forced the migrant workers who built the now-famous Bird's Nest Stadium to leave town in order to preserve the appearance of a clean and prosperous city. Clearly, a China that was too concerned with its appearance ultimately disregarded the treatment of its citizens and ultimately failed to learn from its tragic blunder nearly 20 years ago.

Looking to the future, one can only hope that China finally realized the importance of treating all of its citizens with dignity and respect. The United Nations and other nations should continue helping China to make progress, for by working together, we can make the world a better place to live.