

Actor Stephen Fry Calls for Ban on Sochi Olympics Over Russia's Anti-Gay Policies

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Film and television star Stephen Fry urged the British prime minister and the International Olympics Committee on Wednesday to impose an "absolute ban" on the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi for what he described as Russia's persecution of gays.

Fry compared Russian President Vladimir Putin and the country's recent anti-gay legislation to Adolf Hitler's persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany.

"He is making scapegoats of gay people, just as Hitler did Jews," the British actor said in an [open letter](#) published on his website. Putin "cannot be allowed to get away with it."

In June, Putin signed a law banning the promotion of "non-traditional sexual relations" toward minors. Violators face fines of between \$120 and \$30,000.

While the law's proponents say it is aimed at protecting children from harmful influences,

critics say it is part of a broader crackdown on Russia's gay community.

In July, Putin signed a law prohibiting the adoption of Russian children by foreign same-sex couples. The legislation comes 20 years after homosexuality was decriminalized in Russia. A Stalinist-era law had punished homosexuality with up to five years in prison.

In his letter, Fry called on British Prime Minister David Cameron and the IOC to ban the Sochi Games, widely known as Putin's pet project.

"An absolute ban on the Russian Winter Olympics of 2014 in Sochi is simply essential," Fry said. "At all costs, Putin cannot be seen to have the approval of the civilized world."

The anti-gay legislation has already attracted calls from activists around the world to boycott the Sochi Olympics.

An athlete found to be "propagandizing" gay relationships in Sochi would be "held accountable," Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko said earlier this month.

But the IOC told the R-Sport news agency that it was unmoved by the minister's comments and said it still had faith in the "assurances from the highest level of government in Russia" that athletes and spectators would be exempt from the law.

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