

U.S. Private Security Firm On Standby in Case of Emergency During Olympics

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A U.S. crisis-response firm will have five aircraft on standby during the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi in the event that an emergency requires an evacuation.

The private Global Rescue firm, which had announced in November that it would assist the U.S. ski and snowboard teams during the Olympics, will stand by 375 athletes, staff and guests, CEO Dan Richards said, USA Today reported on Tuesday.

Contingency evacuation plans were being prepared in response to the "unique challenge" presented by the Sochi Games, Richards said.

"You just don't have competitions in places like Sochi with any frequency," said Richards, whose Boston-based firm has worked for Olympic teams since the 2006 Winter Games in Turin, Italy. "In the last 10 years, there has been nothing like it."

One of the aircraft prepared by Global Security could carry 200 passengers out of the region, if needed, and the firm would also help identify safe locations and methods of exit, Richards said.

Richards said he did not expect there to be a major emergency, reiterating the view pronounced earlier by head of the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics Mitt Romney and head of the U.S. delegation to Sochi Janet Napolitano, that Russia is taking sufficient precautions to ensure a safe Olympics.

"The Russians are doing everything that can reasonably be done," Richards said.

The Games are scheduled to take place in the wake of the two recent suicide bombings that killed at least 34 people in Volgograd, 700 kilometers away, underscoring security threats that many observers have described as unprecedented.

Russian troops, police and security forces in Sochi went on combat readiness on Tuesday, a month before the Games are set to begin on Feb.7.

Russia has also activated a space-based surveillance system and has installed equipment allowing it to monitor all phone and online communications in the city.

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