

U.S. Congressmen Raise Safety Concerns About Sochi Games

By [The Moscow Times](#)

January 20, 2014

The  **Moscow Times**

WASHINGTON — Members of the U.S. Congress have expressed serious concerns about the safety of Americans at next month's Winter Olympics in Sochi and said Moscow needs to cooperate more on security.

Suicide bombings last month in Volgograd, located about 640 kilometers from where the Sochi Games will be held, have contributed to the safety anxiety. President Vladimir Putin has promised that his country will do all it can to ensure a safe Olympics without imposing security measures that are too intrusive.

The State Department has advised Americans who plan to attend the Olympics that they should keep vigilant about security because of potential terrorist threats, crime and uncertain medical care.

"We do not seem to be getting all of the information we need to protect our athletes in the

Games," said Republican Rep. Mike Rogers, chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, on Sunday. "I think this needs to change, and it should change soon."

But FBI director James Comey said earlier in January that the Russian government "understands the threat and is devoting the resources to address it."

Rogers contended that the Russians "are not giving us the full story about what are the threat streams, who do we need to worry about, are those groups, the terrorist groups who have had some success, are they still plotting? There is a missing gap, and you never want that when you go into something I think as important as the Olympic Games and the security of the athletes, and the participants and those who come to watch."

Republican Rep. Michael McCaul, chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, said from Moscow that he planned to be in Sochi on Monday to assess the security situation.

"All the briefings that I have received, from the intelligence community to the FBI and others, indicate that there are serious concerns, and that we need to do a lot to step up security. I do believe Putin is doing a lot of that," said McCaul.

While he said diplomatic security has declared that Russian cooperation on safety measures is good, he said "it could be a lot better, and that is one thing I want to press while I am over here."

Comey, the FBI head, told reporters this month in Washington that "we have been in regular communication — including me personally — with their security organizations to make sure we are coordinating well. I think that we are. We have improved our information sharing on counterterrorism and it is important."

An insurgency seeking to create an independent Islamic state in the Caucasus has swept the region after two separatist wars in Chechnya. Chechnya's Moscow-backed strongman, Ramzan Kadyrov, claimed Thursday that Umarov was dead, but he offered no proof to the claim he had repeatedly made in the past.

Rogers appeared on CNN's "State of the Union" and CBS' "Face the Nation." King was on CNN and McCaul spoke on ABC's "This Week."

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