

# Judo Federation Defends Russian Sanctioned by U.S.

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**The  Moscow Times**

Judo's world governing body defended one of its Russian officials on Monday after he was targeted by U.S. sanctions over the crisis in Ukraine.

Arkady Rotenberg, a childhood friend and former judo sparring partner of President Vladimir Putin, is development manager and an executive committee member of the International Judo Federation.

The Russian billionaire was one of 20 people from Putin's inner circle hit by economic sanctions imposed last week by U.S. President Barack Obama following Russia's annexation of the Crimean Peninsula.

Rotenberg is also on the executive committee of the SportAccord Convention, an annual conference of Olympic and sports industry leaders. The 2014 convention will be held next month in Antalya, Turkey.

IJF President Marius Vizer said the U.S. action against Rotenberg "seems very bizarre to me,"

insisting it was up to Russia and Ukraine to solve their problems through "direct dialogue."

"I do not see any connection with the application of sanctions by the U.S. against a private person who does not have anything to do with the process and the political decisions that occurred between the two states," Vizer said in a statement to The Associated Press.

He said Rotenberg "honors us and remains rooted in our community" and will continue to carry out his judo roles.

"His freedom of movement might be affected by these arbitrary measures and his activity might be more difficult in these conditions, but all the other IJF officials will compensate these flaws, thus showing their solidarity towards Mr. Rotenberg," Vizer said.

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