

FIFA Opposes Boycott of 2018 World Cup in Russia

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Russian President Vladimir Putin (L) speaks to FIFA President Sepp Blatter during the 2014 World Cup final between Germany and Argentina at the Maracana stadium in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The global football management body spoke out Friday against public calls to boycott the next World Cup, to be hosted by Russia in 2018.

"History has shown so far that boycotting sport events or a policy of isolation or confrontation are not the most effective ways to solve problems," FIFA said in a statement.

"The FIFA World Cup can be a force for good and FIFA believes this will be the case for the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia," the organization said.

The proposed boycott is a backlash against Russia's alleged support of pro-Moscow separatists in eastern Ukraine and possible involvement in the shooting down of a Malaysia Airlines passenger jet carrying nearly 300 people over the rebel-controlled area last week.

The boycott is being lobbied by two U.S. senators, a member of the British shadow Cabinet

and many Western media, among others.

Moscow has staunchly denied all allegations of involvement in Ukraine's unrest.

Russia hosted the Winter Olympics in the subtropical city of Sochi this February, turning it into a PR victory for the Kremlin, though the positive impact was largely negated by the Ukrainian conflict.

The Kremlin appears to have high hopes for the 2018 event, the first World Cup to be hosted in Russia.

President Vladimir Putin said earlier this month the country will waive visa requirements for foreign spectators and personnel for the duration of the tournament, something that was not done even for Sochi.

The event will have a price tag of 660 billion rubles (\$19 billion), Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said last month. The cost of the Sochi Games quadrupled from early estimates to reach \$51 billion.

Russia, along with Qatar, the 2024 host, has had to battle accusations of bribing FIFA to be awarded the hosting rights. An investigation is ongoing, with the results expected in September.

Russia is currently 23rd in FIFA's team rating, down six places from before the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, where the national side failed to qualify from its group.

See also:

[What Russia's World Cup Would Look Like if Hit by a European Boycott](#)

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