

Russia Won't Act on Doping Claims Before Beijing Championship

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russia's Athletic Federation will not act on allegations of widespread doping among its sports stars before the world athletics championships in Beijing later this month, the acting head of the body, Vadim Zelichenok, told Reuters on Monday.

Russia accounted for majority of abnormal readings in an investigation by Britain's Sunday Times newspaper and German broadcaster ARD/WDR, which got access to thousands of blood test results from 2001-2012.

"All drug testing conducted by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) is kept there. This means they (journalists) managed to get their hands on test results illegally and this secret material was published by the press," Zelichenok said, dismissing the allegations.

"The IAAF is very worried and will conduct an investigation into this and could also open legal proceedings," he said in a telephone interview. "We will not take any action before the World Championships, which start in Beijing on Aug. 22. We physically won't be able to do anything

before then. The reputation of the IAAF is at stake and we are a member of this organization. We will see what they do and it is possible we could go down the same route."

Zelichenok also echoed comments at the weekend by Russian Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko who dismissed the publication as power struggle within the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) before it elects a new head.

According to the two media outlets, the results of 12,000 blood tests provided by more than 5,000 athletes showed more than 800 athletes had given samples that were "highly suggestive" of doping, or abnormal.

Of those, 415 were Russian athletes and the publication puts more pressure on Russian sports after a corruption scandal at world soccer governing body FIFA cast a cloud over the country's right to host the 2018 World Cup.

Image Tarnished

Speaking to the Moskovsky Komsomolets daily on Monday, a former Russian anti-doping official said the publication was an attempt to tarnish Russia's "bright national image" ahead of the 2018 soccer championship.

"One thing is clear. The Germans have developed a new type of sport — hunting Russian sportsmen. A safari, the hell with them," Nikolay Durmanov, the former head of Russia's anti-doping committee, was quoted as saying.

Durmanov said Russia should consider filing a lawsuit against the journalists, a criticism echoed by the managing director of Russia's anti-doping watchdog RUSADA, Nikita Kamaev.

"German journalists are not interested in seeking the truth and fighting doping. They have more interest equally in self-promotion and starting a scandal," he said.

Kamaev also said RUSADA is working with WADA in investigating doping allegations made in another ARD documentary last year. He said that investigation would be completed by the end of 2015.

The 2014 documentary features what it says is undercover video of Russian athletes and coaches admitting to covering up positive tests and alleges corruption and systematic doping culture among Russian athletes and high-ranking officials.

Some of the athletes named in the latest film were competing in the city of Cheboksary on the Volga River on Monday and Tuesday, where they are seeking to be selected for Russia's national team for Beijing.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov declined to comment on the latest allegations, saying it was a matter for the sports minister rather than President Vladimir Putin. That approach contrasts with strong comments by the Kremlin over the FIFA scandal and in defense of Russia's right to host the 2018 World Cup. Putin even said FIFA boss Sepp Blatter, who announced he would step down over the corruption scandal, deserved a Nobel Prize for his stewardship of soccer's top body.

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