

Russian Sports Minister Mutko Offers to Help in WADA Hacker Investigation

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Russian Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko **Andrei Makhonin / Vedomosti**

The Russian Sports Ministry has been directed to help investigate the hackers who attacked computer systems at the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), the R-Sport news website reported Thursday.

Russian Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko gave the order after WADA Director General Olivier Niggli requested the Kremlin's assistance, R-Sport reported.

A group of hackers working under the name "Fancy Bear" first leaked the WADA medical records of U.S. athletes on Sept. 13. A second leak on Sept. 15 released further records for athletes from eight countries, including Russian boxer, Misha Aloyan.

Aloyan was found to have traces of nasal decongestant tuaminoheptane, a WADA-banned substance, in a sample taken during the 2016 Olympics in Brazil's Rio de Janeiro.

A number of media outlets have reported that the group consists of Russian hackers, claims which Sports Minister Mutko has denied.

“How can they prove that these hackers are from Russia,” Mutko told the Agence France Presse news agency on Wednesday. “Russia is accused of everything. We're worried that these hackers have access to the files of Russian sports people, and they also could become victims.”

Relations between Russia and WADA have plummeted since July, when a WADA-backed report accused the Russian state of promoting, carrying out and covering up a widespread doping scheme for its athletes.

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