

Putin Says Russia Won't Boycott Olympics, Admits Partial Blame

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Vladimir Putin / Kremlin Press Service

Russia will not boycott the upcoming Olympic Games in South Korea, President Vladimir Putin said Wednesday during a visit to the Gorky car plant where he also [announced](#) his run for the presidency in March 2018.

His statement comes a day after the International Olympic Committee (IOC) [announced](#) that Russia was banned from participating in the 2018 Winter Games in Pyeongchang due to "systematic manipulation of the anti-doping rules and system." Russian athletes vetted by an IOC panel will be allowed to compete under a neutral flag.

Some Russian officials and athletes have called for a boycott of the Games in response.

Related article: [Russia Banned From Winter Olympics — the Reactions](#)

"Without a doubt, we will not announce any obstacles, we won't stop our Olympians from

taking part if someone wants to participate in a personal capacity," Putin was [cited](#) as saying by the Interfax news agency.

Amid criticism that Russia's leadership has failed to acknowledge any responsibility in the doping scandal, Putin appeared to make a half-apology before hinting that the sanctions are politically motivated.

"First, it must be said outright, that we are in part to blame for this ourselves because we provided a reason for this," he said. "And second, I believe that this reason was used in not an entirely honest way, to put it mildly," said Putin.

"Most of the accusations are based on facts that are not proven at all and are to a significant degree unfounded," Putin added.

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) [ruled](#) last month that Russia's anti-doping body had failed to meet international standards for the third year in a row.

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