

Russia Bracing for Doping 'Provocations' Ahead of 2018 World Cup

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Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

Russia's sports minister on Wednesday said he expects more "provocations" amid a doping scandal embroiling the country as it prepares to host the 2018 World Cup.

FIFA [announced](#) last week it planned to test past samples provided by the Russian soccer team, possibly affecting the host country's chances of participating in the tournament next summer. Officials including President Vladimir Putin say the doping scandal and Russia's ban from the Winter Olympics next year is a Western conspiracy.

"There will, of course, be provocations, but they should be reacted to calmly — and through the legal sphere," Pavel Kolobkov was [cited](#) by the Interfax news agency as saying.

"The main thing is not to give a reason for such provocations."

Earlier this year, Russia's entire 2014 FIFA World Cup squad was [included](#) on a list of athletes that may have benefited from doping.

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