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Mutko Removed as Chief Organizer of Russia's 2018 World Cup

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Vitaly Mutko / Andrei Nikerichev / Moskva News Agency

Deputy Prime Minister Vitaly Mutko has been ordered to step down as head of Russia's 2018 World Cup Organizing Committee by a governmental decree published Thursday.

The former sports minister had been under increasing pressure to step down from the committee after receiving a lifetime ban from the Olympics last month for his role in a state-run doping scheme at the 2014 Winter Games in Sochi. Prior to his removal, Mutko was a key figure behind preparations for next year's World Cup in Russia.

Related article: Embattled Football Chief Mutko Steps Down to Fight Doping Ban

The government order for Mutko to be removed was published Thursday on the official Russian government legal portal.

No official reason was given for the decision.

Late last month, Mutko temporarily stepped aside from his role as the head of Russia's Football Union. The decision was welcomed by FIFA as a move "taken in the best interest of the World Cup next summer."

Alexei Sorokin was named the new chairman of the Organizing Committee's supervisory board.

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