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Russia Slams Saudi 'Fake News'

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Carl Recine / Reuters

Russia's Foreign Ministry has slammed as fake news a Saudi report accusing the Russian team of doping.

Russia crushed the Saudi team 5-0 in the World Cup opening match.

In an article published on the Saudi outlet Slaati.com, the "author cites an unnamed 'German television outlet' to say that Russia's security services are involved in a sophisticated cover-up," the Foreign Ministry said in an online statement.

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The article claimed that "Russia only beat Saudi Arabia because it used banned substances," it continued.

"We hope that the fake news article will inspire a different sentiment among Saudi fans than those who ordered [the article] had in mind."

The ministry said the Saudi outlet was presumably referring to ARD, the German broadcaster whose investigation first exposed widespread doping among Russian athletes.

"*The article claimed Russia won by using banned substances.*"

In a recent report, the broadcaster said a top Russian football player had been among those being investigated by WADA on doping suspicions. The player was later dropped from the national squad. FIFA, however, this week said it had not found any evidence of doping among Russian players.

Russia's Foreign Ministry frequently points out news articles it considers to be untruthful, labeling them as "fake news."

Meanwhile, a recent poll by the state-run Public Opinion Foundation conducted in June found that 66 percent of Russians questioned had never heard of the term "fake news."

Forty-seven percent, however, said they had encountered inaccurate reporting.

Includes reporting by Anton Muratov.

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