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Head Organizer Denies Any Fights, Harassment During World Cup

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Andrei Nikerichev / Moskva News Agence

The head organizer of Russia's World Cup has a firm position: he doesn't know of any major violence involving fans midway through the football tournament, despite reports of harassment, brawls and Nazi salutes.

Authorities vowed to host a safe event amid concern that any security incidents could jeopardize Russia's efforts to improve its international standing by hosting the World Cup. But at least three female journalists have been sexually harassed while on air, brawls have broken out at several stadiums and a number of fans have been arrested since the games kicked off on June 14.

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"We didn't have a single security incident or complaint," the head of the World Cup

Organizing Committee Alexei Sorokin told Interfax on Friday.

Sorokin said he is "unaware of cases of sexual harassment... as far as I know, there's no serious problem with this." And addressing crowd violence during the Brazil-Serbia match, he dismissed the fights as "incidents among fans."

"I wouldn't call them fights," said Sorokin.

Moscow is also hosting an international police cooperation center, with officers from 32 World Cup participating countries in Russia to help deter hooliganism and any possible attacks.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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