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Russian State TV Cuts from Ukraine to Ad in Olympic Opening Ceremony Broadcast

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Channel One skipped over Ukraine's 155 athletes **Stanislav Krasilnikov / TASS**

Russian state television cut to a commercial during the Ukrainian Olympic team's appearance in its broadcast of the Tokyo 2020 Opening Ceremony Friday.

During the Opening Ceremony's parade of athletes — which took place in a nearly empty stadium due to the coronavirus pandemic — Russia's Channel One took a commercial shortly before the Ugandan team's march and resumed airing during the Uruguayan team's march, skipping over Ukraine's 155 athletes.

Channel One denied that the cutaway was intentional, saying it was a scheduled commercial break.

"The parade of athletes lasts about two hours, and in order to fulfill commercial obligations its broadcast is interrupted by advertising several times," a Channel One representative told

the RBC news website.

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Earlier Friday, the International Olympic Committee sparked outcry by publishing a map showing Crimea, which Moscow annexed from Kiev in 2014, as being separate from Ukraine. The IOC corrected the map shortly after.

Russia and Ukraine are locked in a bitter feud over a deadly seven-year conflict in eastern Ukraine, Moscow's seizure of Crimea and, more recently, the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, Kiev's banning of pro-Russia television channels and what Moscow claims is discrimination against Russian-speaking Ukrainians.

This week, Russia filed an interstate claim against Ukraine with the European Court of Human Rights, citing a litany of disputable grievances that Kiev brushed off.

Russia's 355 Olympic athletes are competing under the flag of the Russian Olympic Committee due to a ban stemming from state-sponsored doping violations.

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