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IOC Investigates Anti-LGBT Slurs Against Olympic Athletes on Russian TV – BBC

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Weightlifter Laurel Hubbard. **Seth Wenig / AP / TASS**

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) is investigating two Russian state-run TV channels over talk shows that disparaged the lifestyles of a transgender and a gay athlete as "perversion" and "abomination," the BBC has reported.

Two of Russia's most popular channels, Rossiya and Channel One, dedicated several of their late-July talk shows to transgender New Zealand weightlifter Laurel Hubbard and British gold medal-winning diver Tom Daley, who is gay.

"We stand opposed to all this smut and perversion," lawmaker Alexei Zhuravlyov said during a panel discussion on Rossiya's "60 Minutes" show, according to the BBC's media-monitoring service. "We stand against this abomination."

Anatoly Kuzichev, host of Channel One's "Vremya Pokazhet" program, wore a long wig

during one of the broadcasts to mock Hubbard and call transgender people “psychopaths.”

“We have been in contact with our contractual broadcasting partner in Russia in order to get clarity on the situation and to underline the Fundamental Principles of the Olympic Charter,” the IOC said in a statement to the BBC.

“We are following up accordingly,” it added.

Hubbard, 43, is the first transgender athlete to compete in the Olympics, reigniting one of the most divisive issues in sport. Born male and competing as a man before transitioning to female in her 30s, Hubbard qualified to lift as a woman after showing testosterone levels below the IOC’s threshold.

She announced her retirement after her short-lived appearance in the +87kg category this week.

The IOC is set to release new guidelines on transgender participation after the Tokyo Games.

During his two decades in power, President Vladimir Putin has sought to distance Russia from Western values, including liberal attitudes toward homosexuality and gender fluidity. Last year, Putin signed a series of constitutional amendments into law which, among other things, formally define marriage as a union between a man and a woman.

Though Russians’ attitudes toward LGBT people have improved somewhat over the past decade and a half, recent polling still shows three-quarters of Russians opposing gay marriage.

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