

Russian Football Captain Artem Dzyuba Denies Asking Not to be Called Up Because of Political Concerns

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Artem Dzyuba. **Valentina Pevtsova / TASS**

Russian footballer Artem Dzyuba denied asking not to be called up to the Russian national side over the situation in Ukraine.

Russia's national team captain was believed to have pulled out of an international training camp over concerns about the ongoing war in Ukraine, however Dzyuba later rebutted these claims, citing a misunderstanding between him and national team coach Valery Karpin.

"It seems to me that there was a misunderstanding. Coach Valery Georgievich Karpin misunderstood me, or his words were misinterpreted," the Zenit St. Petersburg forward said to the Sport-Express news outlet.

Russia's joint all-time top goalscorer allegedly phoned Karpin Sunday to ask not to be included in a training camp at the end of March, as he has family members in Ukraine and did

not want to represent Russia at this time, Karpin said early Tuesday.

"Artem assured me that he really wants to play for the national team. But now, due to the difficult situation in Ukraine, where he has many relatives, he apologized and asked for family reasons not to call him up," [said](#) Karpin.

Dzyuba later refuted Karpin's claims, stating that the reasons he requested to be omitted from the national squad was due to family circumstances.

"I didn't not join the Russian national team because of political issues. It's about family circumstances, but I don't want to go into details," Dzyuba was quoted as saying.

Dzyuba caused a stir earlier this month when he spoke out on his instagram, denouncing the war and the subsequent anti-Russian sentiment he believes has been directed at Russian athletes following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"I am against any war, war is scary." the Zenit St. Petersburg forward [wrote](#) on his instagram page.

"I'm not ashamed to be Russian. I'm proud to be Russian. And I don't understand why athletes have to suffer now," he added.

Dzyuba's criticism was leveled at the international sporting community's decision to exclude Russian athletes from several sporting events and competitions.

Football governing bodies FIFA and UEFA ruled February to suspend all Russian teams — the national side and domestic clubs — from future competitions following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, a decision that was upheld by the Court of Arbitration for Sport on Tuesday.

The suspension will ensure Russia will be unable to compete in the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, which would likely be 33-year-old Dzyuba's final time captaining his country at international football's most prestigious event.

The sporting and cultural boycott mirrors a mass exodus of Western businesses from Russia after the imposition of tough sanctions on the Russian economy.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said February he was surprised that Western sanctions went as far as hitting Russia's cultural spheres.

"We were ready for sanctions but did not expect that they would affect athletes, intellectuals, actors, and journalists," Lavrov [said](#).

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