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Russia Hopes to Rejoin 'Olympic Family'

By AFP

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Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov. **Sergei Guneev, RIA-Novosti / kremlin.ru**

The Kremlin said on Friday it hopes Russia could once again become part of the Olympic community despite sanctions against Russian athletes over Moscow's offensive in Ukraine.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has suggested allowing athletes from Russia and Moscow's ally Belarus to compete as individuals under a neutral flag at the 2024 Olympics in Paris.

"We hope that in the end reason will prevail, that the idea of Olympism will triumph and that we will again be reintegrated into the Olympic family," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

"In the end, it's the very idea of Olympism that will suffer, and is already suffering" from the restrictions, Peskov said.

"The highest sporting achievements are impossible without state support," he added.

Russia has said Moscow will not be boycotting the 2024 Games and every Russian athlete is free to choose to compete under a neutral banner.

Ukraine has advocated against allowing the participation of Russian athletes, arguing that sport cannot be separated from politics.

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