

Russia Says IOC Ruling on Athletes Was Mocking

By [AFP](#)

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Russian Olympic Committee president Stanislav Pozdnyakov. **Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

Russia criticized the International Olympic Committee (IOC) on Friday for ruling that Russian athletes can only compete in Paris next year as neutral athletes and if they do not back fighting in Ukraine.

Olympic chiefs earlier this month gave the green light to the participation of Russian and Belarusian athletes at next year's Games as neutrals, outside of team events, and as long as they did not actively support Moscow's large-scale military intervention in Ukraine.

The IOC "announced their readiness to admit Russian and Belarusian athletes to the Paris Olympics, and then immediately mockingly announced how many of them had been admitted," Russian Olympic Committee president Stanislav Pozdnyakov said at a press conference.

The IOC on making its announcement this month said there were currently only eight athletes from Russia and three from Belarus who had qualified as neutral athletes.

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It said that no Russian or Belarusian athletes under contract with military or national security agencies would be allowed to compete.

It added that no Russian and Belarusian flags or symbols would be displayed at the games.

President Vladimir Putin said Russian authorities would need to thoroughly assess the conditions allowing Russian athletes to attend the Paris Olympics in summer 2024.

"By inventing criteria and parameters that not only violate but devalue the Olympic Charter, the IOC has launched a campaign that neutralizes our athletes," Pozdnyakov said.

"And those few who managed to slip through are deprived of their national identity," he added.

He called on eligible athletes to "carefully examine" the participation conditions to avoid becoming "hostage to other interests."

More than 60 Ukrainian athletes have qualified for next year's Paris Olympics, the IOC said earlier this month.

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