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Russian Appeal Against Olympic Suspension Dismissed as Moscow Blasts 'Discrimination'

By AFP

February 23, 2024



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Russia's appeal against its suspension by the International Olympic Committee was dismissed by the Court of Arbitration for Sport on Friday with Moscow lambasting its banishment from this summer's Paris Games as "discrimination."

The IOC suspended the Russian Olympic Committee (ROC) in October last year for violating the territorial integrity of the membership of Ukraine by recognizing illegally annexed territories.

"The CAS panel in charge of this matter dismissed the appeal and confirmed the challenged decision, finding that the IOC executive board did not breach the principles of legality, equality, predictability or proportionality," the Court of Arbitration for Sport said in its ruling.

"The CAS panel's decision is final and binding except for the parties' right to file an appeal to the Swiss Federal Tribunal within 30 days on limited grounds."

The IOC suspension of the ROC came on Oct. 12, 2023, a week after it had decided to include, as its members, the regional sports organizations that are under the authority of Ukraine's National Olympic Committee, namely Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia.

The IOC said it was "pleased" at the CAS ruling at its Lausanne headquarters on Friday.

ROC's decision to include organizations under Ukraine's NOC charge "constitutes a breach of the Olympic Charter because it violates the territorial integrity of the NOC of Ukraine, as recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in accordance with the Olympic Charter," an IOC spokesman said.

"The IOC EB (executive board) decision has been duly implemented since it was taken."

The ROC reacted at the time of its suspension by denouncing it as "yet another counterproductive, politically motivated decision" taken by the IOC.

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On Friday, Russia again blasted the decision.

"The CAS decision is further evidence that civil and sports discrimination against Russians has reached unprecedented proportions in the run-up to the Games in Paris," the ROC said in a statement.

The ROC had appealed the suspension with CAS, sport's highest tribunal, on Nov. 6.

The IOC went on to give the green light in December to the participation of Russian and Belarusian athletes at this year's Paris Games as neutrals, outside of team events and as long as they did not actively support the war on Ukraine.

At the time, the IOC said that there were only eight athletes from Russia and three from Belarus who had qualified as neutral athletes.

In comparison, more than 60 Ukrainian athletes had qualified for the Paris Olympics which run from July 26-Aug. 11.

Russia denounced the conditions placed on its athletes as "discriminatory," but said athletes who meet the criteria would go to Paris.

The 2024 Olympics in the French capital run from July 26 until Aug. 11.

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