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Russia Says Journalists Stripped of Olympic Accreditation

By AFP

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Spectators are seen on a bridge across the River Seine as boats carrying athletes pass below during the Opening Ceremony of the 2024 Summer Olympic Games. **Yegor Aleyev / TASS**

Russia's TASS state news agency said Sunday the Paris Olympics organizing committee had stripped four of its journalists of accreditation to cover the Games after they attended initial events.

TASS said that the removal of the reporters' accreditation, essential to cover the Games, was "completely unexpected" after the journalists had entered France, received passes and attended the opening and several events.

"The Paris 2024 Organizing Committee... cited the decision of the authorities of France, but did not mention any concrete grievances and reasons for such a decision," the agency said in a statement.

One of the journalists, Artyom Kuznetsov, was covering his seventh Olympics, TASS said.

Contacted by AFP, the International Olympic Committee and the French Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Earlier, some Russian journalists had accreditation requests denied, prompting Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova to tell TASS that "observing the rights of journalists and providing freedom of speech are just empty sounds for [President Emmanuel] Macron and his gang."

Related article: Who Are the Russian Athletes Competing in the Paris Olympics?

Just 15 Russian athletes have been accredited to compete at the Olympics as neutrals as most sports have banned Russians and their allies in response to Moscow's military operation in Ukraine.

A few days before the opening of the Games, French police arrested a Russian man suspected of plotting acts of "destabilization" during the Paris Olympics.

French prosecutors said the man, born in 1984, was suspected of "passing intelligence to a foreign power in order to arouse hostilities in France," a charge punishable by up to 30 years in prison.

Le Monde and other media named the suspect as Kirill Gryaznov, a chef originally from the city of Perm in the Urals.

Russia gave the opening ceremony a critical reception, with Zakharova describing it as a "massive failure."

TASS wrote the opening "was notable for a number of awkward situations," noting gaffes such as the Olympic flag raised upside-down and viewers leaving early due to pouring rain.

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