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Olympic Organizers Confirm Russian Journalists Stripped of Accreditation

By AFP

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Flags hoisted over the Paris 2024 Olympics banner. **Yegor Aleyev / TASS**

Olympic organizers on Monday confirmed that they canceled the accreditation of some reporters after Russia's state-run TASS news agency said several of its journalists could no longer cover the Paris Games.

TASS reported on Sunday that the removal of its journalists' accreditation, essential for covering sporting events, was "completely unexpected" and came after the journalists arrived in France, received passes and attended the opening and several events.

"I can confirm that some accredited journalists have received an a posteriori decision from the competent authorities to withdraw their accreditation," Paris Olympics spokeswoman Anne Descamps told reporters.

"As the Paris 2024 Organising Committee, we are applying the decision without being

involved in the rationale behind this information, which has not been communicated to us," she added.

Descamps said she did not know how many journalists were affected. France's Interior Ministry said it had no comment when contacted by AFP.

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TASS said the Paris Olympics organizing committee stripped four of its journalists of their accreditation. One of the journalists, Artyom Kuznetsov, has covered several Olympic Games and was seen together with other journalists who received accreditation to cover the Paris Games' opening ceremony on Friday evening.

Team Russia was banned from playing at the 2024 Olympics over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, now in its third year. Just 15 Russian athletes were allowed to compete at the Olympics as neutrals, and they did not take part in the opening ceremony.

Russia gave the opening ceremony a critical reception, with foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova describing it as a "massive failure." Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev called the opening ceremony a "disgusting spectacle" and a "freak show."

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

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

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