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Paralympics Body Says 88 Russians to Compete as Neutrals in Paris

By AFP

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AP/TASS

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) said Monday that 88 Russian competitors will take part in the Paris Paralympics under a neutral banner.

The Games, which kick off on Wednesday, will also feature eight Belarusians competing as neutrals, IPC spokesman Craig Spence said at a press conference.

Para-athletes from Russia and its ally Belarus have had to compete under a neutral banner after being largely banned from major world sporting events following Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

The IPC, along with other world sporting federations, has overseen their gradual return as neutral participants in the Paralympics. However, individuals who qualified were required to go through a two-step verification process to be invited to compete at the games.

A third-party agency, employed by the IPC, was tasked with checking that potential competitors did not actively support the war in Ukraine, or have any links to their countries' militaries.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) undertook a similar process for the Olympic Games earlier this summer. Thirty-two neutral athletes from Russia and Belarus competed at the Olympic Games in Paris.

Paralympians from the two countries will not be allowed to participate in Wednesday's opening ceremony in Paris.

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