

# Russian Athletes Allowed to Compete at 2026 Winter Olympics Under Neutral Flag

By [AFP](#)

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**Sergei Karpukhin / TASS**

The International Olympic Committee announced Friday that athletes from Russia will be allowed to compete at the 2026 Winter Olympics in Italy under a neutral banner if they meet strict conditions.

"The Executive Board will take the exact same approach that was done in Paris," IOC president Kirsty Coventry said, referring to last year's Paris Olympics, where Russian athletes could only take part under a neutral flag and in individual events.

At the Paris Games, athletes were also required to undergo checks to prove they did not actively support the war in Ukraine or have any links with the army, restrictions introduced after the 2022 invasion.

The IOC's decision, which it made at a meeting in Milan on Friday, had been widely expected.

"I believe that it's best for our movement to ensure that we have all athletes represented," Coventry said in March when she was elected head of the IOC.

The limited presence of Russian and Belarusian athletes in Paris last year was seen by the IOC as a success, allowing the Games to avoid boycotts by Ukraine and allied nations.

The size of the neutral delegation in 2026 will depend on individual sports federations, some of which continue to bar Russian and Belarusian competitors from their events.

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