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Russian Gymnasts Withdraw From World Challenge Cup in Romania After Flag Ban

By AFP

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Russian gymnast Alexandra Borisova. **Artur Novosiltsev / Moskva News Agency**

Russia's national rhythmic gymnastics team said Friday that it has withdrawn from the World Challenge Cup in Romania, accusing local organizers of violating regulations by banning the display of their national flag and the playing of their anthem.

"The Russian rhythmic gymnastics team has decided to withdraw from the Challenge Cup, which is taking place from June 26 to 28 in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. This decision is due to serious violations of competition regulations by the organizers," the team said in a statement.

"The organizers verbally informed us that the Russian national flag would not be displayed in the sports arena and the national anthem would not be played if the Russian gymnasts won," it added.

On Wednesday, the mayor of Cluj-Napoca, Emil Boc, said on social media that Russian state

symbols would be barred from the city's BT Arena during the event.

"I do not agree that the political symbols of an aggressor state in Europe should be used in a country of the European Union," Boc said.

World Gymnastics, the sport's governing body, voted in May to readmit Russian and Belarusian athletes under their full national symbols following a four-year ban linked to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Russia said it is considering legal action to enforce compliance with the global ruling.

World Gymnastics did not immediately comment on the Russian team's decision to withdraw from the World Challenge Cup in Romania

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