



International
Olympic
Committee

Following a request by the 11th Olympic Summit, IOC issues recommendations for International Federations and international sports event organisers on the participation of athletes with a Russian or Belarusian passport in international competitions

The [11th Olympic Summit that met on 9 December 2022](#), consisting of the leaders of all stakeholder groups of the Olympic Movement, had requested the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to explore a pathway for athletes with a Russian or Belarusian passport to return to international competitions as Individual Neutral Athletes. Following a four-month consultation period, the IOC Executive Board (EB) discussed this request today.

The EB reiterates that the participation of athletes with a Russian or Belarusian passport at the Olympic Games Paris 2024 was not considered either in the consultations or in its deliberations today. The IOC expressly reserves the right to decide about their participation at the appropriate time, even if they would be considered to have qualified according to the qualification criteria set by their respective International Federations (IFs).

Following the request of the Olympic Summit, extensive consultations and discussions took place with all Olympic Movement stakeholders: the IOC Members, the National Olympic Committees (NOCs), the IFs and the global network of athletes' representatives. The IOC EB also issued a statement on 25 January 2023, entitled: [Statement on solidarity with Ukraine, sanctions against Russia and Belarus, and the status of athletes from these countries](#).

During these consultations, all Olympic Movement stakeholders once again reiterated their support for the IOC's call for peace. The Olympic Movement continues to make its contributions to any peace-building efforts. It feels deeply for the Ukrainian people and the Ukrainian Olympic community, whose pain and suffering are beyond imagination.

It was also emphasised that the Olympic Games cannot prevent wars and conflicts. Nor can they address all the political and social challenges in our world. This is the realm of politics. But the Olympic Games can set an example for a world where everyone respects the same rules and one another. They can inspire us to solve problems by building bridges, leading to better understanding among people. They can open the door to dialogue and peace-building in ways that exclusion and division do not.

Solidarity with Ukrainian athletes reaffirmed

The IOC EB today reaffirms the steadfast commitment of the entire Olympic Movement to help Ukrainian athletes in every way possible, in order to see a strong team from the National Olympic Committee of Ukraine at the Olympic Games Paris 2024 and the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026. In order to achieve this, the IOC has tripled its Solidarity Fund for the NOC of Ukraine to USD 7.5 million.



At least 3,000 Ukrainian athletes and other members of the Olympic community of Ukraine have benefitted from the IOC Solidarity Fund through the NOC of Ukraine over the past 12 months, and from direct assistance from other Olympic Movement stakeholders, including the IFs and the NOCs. These efforts have taken the form of financial and logistical support, in order to ensure that Ukrainian athletes can continue to train and take part in competitions by providing travel support, training facilities, accommodation, equipment and uniforms, amongst other items.

Sanctions against the Russian and Belarusian governments must remain in place

The IOC EB reiterates today its condemnation of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which is a blatant violation of the Olympic Truce that was in effect at the time, and of the Olympic Charter. For this reason, the IOC has already sanctioned the Russian and Belarusian states and governments, who are solely responsible for this war, in an unprecedented way. In particular, the IOC has recommended that:

- i) no international sports events be organised in Russia and Belarus;
- ii) no flag, anthems or other national symbols whatsoever should be displayed at any international sports events; and
- iii) no government or state officials should be accredited for or invited to any international sports events.

These sanctions were put in place in February 2022 and were then reinforced and confirmed by the Olympic Summit on 9 December 2022. The IOC EB today underlines that they remain firmly in place.

Political interference in sport

In the most recent series of consultations, the Olympic Movement stakeholders reiterated their firm rejection of any political interference in the autonomous authority of sports organisations to decide on participation in their competitions. This clear and strong reaction to political interference was considered necessary, because if governments took over the decisions regarding which athletes can take part in which competitions, it would be the end of world sport as we know it today.

Sports organisations must have the sole responsibility to decide which athletes can take part in international competitions based on their sporting merits and not on political grounds or because of their passports.

In all the deliberations, particular attention was paid to the views from the Ukrainian sports community. The 70 other ongoing armed conflicts and wars around the world (source: Crisis Group, CrisisWatch Database) were also considered, including the situations in the Middle East, the Horn of Africa, and the southern Caucasus. It was noted that NOCs in the regions impacted by these armed conflicts and wars are following the principles of the Olympic



Charter. They are not requesting the exclusion of athletes from the other party in the armed conflict or war, and they are allowing their athletes to compete in international sporting competitions without restrictions.

Human rights considerations

The Olympic Movement stakeholders also saw a need to address the protective measures for athletes and officials with a Russian or Belarusian passport that are currently in place, particularly in the context of the adoption of the [“Sport as an enabler of sustainable development” resolution \(A/77L.28\)](#) by the United Nations General Assembly on 1 December 2022. This resolution recognises that “major international sports events should be organised in the spirit of peace, mutual understanding and international cooperation, friendship and tolerance, and without discrimination of any kind, and that the unifying and conciliative nature of such events should be respected”. It also explicitly acknowledges: “the Olympic Charter, and that any form of discrimination is incompatible with belonging to the Olympic Movement”. It was passed by consensus by all UN Member States, including the governments of Ukraine, Russia and Belarus.

More recently, judgments by the Court of Justice of the European Union further confirmed that sanctions cannot solely be based on a person holding a passport from a particular nation, nor can they be applied simply on the basis of affiliation.

In addition, the urgent request expressed by the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance of the United Nations Human Rights Council was also taken into account.

[They said on 1 February 2023](#): “UN experts today commended the International Olympic Committee for considering allowing individual athletes from Russia and Belarus to take part in international sports competitions as neutral athletes. We urge the IOC to adopt a decision in that direction, and to go further, ensuring the non-discrimination of any athlete on the basis of their nationality.”

The Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights also joined the meeting of the IOC Advisory Committee on Human Rights on 16 and 17 March 2023 and spoke with the athletes’ representatives in their call on 24 March 2023. She also addressed the IOC Members, NOCs and IFs in their consultation calls. In her remarks she considered the legal arguments provided by the NOCs of Ukraine and Germany. Please find attached the transcript of the introduction to her remarks.

The IOC has to rely on the authority of the UN Special Rapporteur, who is appointed by the UN “to raise awareness... draw the attention of governments and others on alleged human rights violations... ask that the violations are prevented, stopped, investigated, or that remedial action is taken.” This is exactly what the Special Rapporteur has done.



International sports competitions

During the consultations with the Olympic Movement stakeholders, which extended over a period of four months, the vast majority of the stakeholders were clear that they want a pathway to be opened for the competitions under their sole authority. They requested from the IOC recommendations in order to harmonise their approach, in the event that they decide to admit athletes with a Russian or Belarusian passport to their competitions. The IOC strongly recommends taking such a decision only with the provision that it can be revoked at the discretion of the IF concerned.

Following this request, the IOC EB today issues to IFs and international sports event organisers the following recommendations:

- 1) Athletes with a Russian or a Belarusian passport must compete only as Individual Neutral Athletes.
- 2) Teams of athletes with a Russian or Belarusian passport cannot be considered.
- 3) Athletes who actively support the war cannot compete. Support personnel who actively support the war cannot be entered.
- 4) Athletes who are contracted to the Russian or Belarusian military or national security agencies cannot compete. Support personnel who are contracted to the Russian or Belarusian military or national security agencies cannot be entered.
- 5) Any such Individual Neutral Athlete, like all the other participating athletes, must meet all anti-doping requirements applicable to them and particularly those set out in the anti-doping rules of the IFs.
- 6) The sanctions against those responsible for the war, the Russian and Belarusian states and governments, must remain in place:
 - a) No international sports events organised or supported by an IF or NOC in Russia or Belarus.
 - b) No flag, anthem, colours or any other identifications whatsoever of these countries displayed at any sports event or meeting, including the entire venue.
 - c) No Russian and Belarusian government or state official can be invited to or accredited for any international sports event or meeting.

(Please see the detailed Recommended Conditions of Participation for Athletes and Athlete Support Personnel with a Russian or Belarusian Passport in International Sports Competitions Organised by the International Federations and International Sports Event Organisers attached.)



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No decision on Paris 2024 or Milano Cortina 2026 participation

The IOC EB confirmed that these recommendations do not concern the participation of athletes and their support personnel with a Russian or Belarusian passport at the Olympic Games Paris 2024 or the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026. The IOC will take this decision at the appropriate time, at its full discretion, and without being bound by the results of previous Olympic qualification competitions.

Throughout the application of the above-mentioned exemptions by the IFs, the IOC will closely monitor the full implementation of these recommendations by all parties concerned. The results of this monitoring procedure will be an important factor in the decision by the IOC concerning the participation of athletes with a Russian or Belarusian passport in the Olympic Games Paris 2024 and the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026.

Lausanne, 28 March 2023