



By: Tomorrow's Affairs Staff

Suspension of Russia from the International Olympic Committee - correct, but insufficient step to protect the Olympic Movement



The Russian boxing team made a video 3 years ago on October 7. The athletes sang to President Vladimir Putin and wished him a happy birthday.

Some members of this boxing choir, assembled in honour of the political leader, will still participate at the Olympic Games in Paris next summer. That is what the International Olympic Committee said.

Last Thursday, the IOC executive board suspended the Russian Olympic Committee (ROC) from membership. However, they offered a glimmer of hope for individual athletes to compete in Paris, although without national symbols.

This hope also applies to the boxers, who voluntarily or under duress sang birthday greetings to their leader.

The Russian Olympic Committee was suspended from the IOC because it annexed sports organisations from 4 Ukrainian regions, which were previously annexed by Russia following military occupation and, after a fake referendum, integrated into its state territory.

This is a severe violation of the Olympic Charter, which the Russians "defended" by simply implementing the decision of their state parliament to integrate 4 occupied Ukrainian regions.

Financial blow

In addition to being suspended, the Russian Olympic Committee was also removed from IOC funding, some of which was transferred to national Olympic bodies.

This is not a small sum, given that the IOC spends 90% of its income on organising the Olympic Games and supporting international sports organisations and national Olympic committees.

According to the IOC, \$4.2 million of its revenues is allocated daily to these addresses to encourage Olympianism and sports

development.

Russia's share is not insignificant. This stems from a recent lawsuit by the Russian Olympic Committee. The IOC is being asked to pay \$8 million that the Russians claim they have not received based on their share of the IOC's marketing income for 2022 and 2023.

Just one day (October 6) after deciding to annex the sports federations from the 4 occupied Ukrainian regions, the leaders of the Russian Olympic Committee filed this complaint, seemingly aware that they would face consequences from the IOC.

The shift is not complete

Sports and state authorities in Kyiv are satisfied with the decision of the IOC Executive Board. "This is an important decision. Sports cannot be excluded from politics, and Russia uses athletes for its propaganda", said Andriy Yermak, head of Ukraine's presidential office.

The decision of the IOC executive body appears, at first glance, like a significant shift in the policy of this organisation towards Russia and its aggression against Ukraine.

However, the IOC continues to make contradictory decisions. At the same time, when it suspended the Russian Olympic Committee, it emphasised that this decision does not affect the earlier position from last March that Russian athletes would be able to participate in the Paris Olympics, but without national symbols.

This reluctance of the IOC to introduce a total blockade of Russian participation in the Olympic games will continue to follow it as a burden and cast a shadow over the Olympic movement as a wavering guardian of its humane values. It will also question the credibility of the Paris Olympics.

The IOC leadership and its leader, Thomas Bach, unconvincingly defended their decision to permit the participation of Russian athletes

at the Paris Olympics on purely sporting grounds.

They face opposition from a powerful coalition led by Ukraine and 35 other countries, which are ready to boycott the Paris Olympics if the IOC decides to stand by its decision to allow Russian athletes to compete.

Russia systematically violates the Olympic rules

The restrictions set by the IOC on the participation of Russian athletes are such that they will not prevent Moscow from using the Paris Olympics for its propaganda in the international arena, which the Kremlin desperately needs.

The IOC conditions permit the participation of Russian athletes on the fact that they did not participate in or support the aggression against Ukraine. However, in the case of Russia, it is simply impossible to determine and separate that.

What is clear is that elite sport in Russia is inseparable from the influence of the state and even the military.

An AP report showed that out of 71 medals won by Russia at the Tokyo 2021 Olympics, as many as 45 athletes came from CSKA, a club run by the Russian army.

The IOC has punished Russia for years, given its long-standing state-sponsored and controlled doping programme of leading athletes.

The suspension from the IOC was a decision that did not require much courage because the brutality with which the Russian Olympic Committee violates the Charter of this organisation is unprecedented in its history.

However, it is the only right step towards the complete defence of the Olympic Movement from the destruction that has been happening systematically for years by the Russian

Olympic Committee and the state that firmly governs it, also acting against Olympic Rules.

Following the decision to suspend the Russian Olympic Committee, only a complete ban on Russian athletes competing in the Paris Olympics will be able to preserve the honour of the Olympic Games.

The first opportunity for this might be during the IOC meeting in Mumbai from October 15 to 17, and only then could it be argued that the IOC has made a genuine and proper shift.