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Russia versus Iran in 'sickening' Canberra soccer contest



By [Steve Evans](#)

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A bizarre soccer match between diplomats from two embassies of countries shunned by Australia has been branded as "sickening" by activists campaigning for Ukraine.

On Friday, staff from the Russian and Iranian embassies met for what the Russian embassy called a "friendly".



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In undiplomatic parlance, the match between the representatives of the two countries heavily sanctioned by the United Nations might be

called "Billy No Mates finds a friend".

"They are two regimes which are killing people daily, and the Australian public needs to be reminded of that," Stefan Romaniw, who chairs the Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations, said.

The result of the fixture is not known.

A post on Facebook from the Russian embassy said: "On 9 February, a friendly soccer match was held between the teams of the Russian and Iranian Embassies in Canberra.

"The sportive event, timed to mark the National Day of Iran and the Diplomats' Day in Russia, was attended by H.E. Ambassador Alexey Pavlovsky and H.E. Ambassador Ahmad Sadeghi."

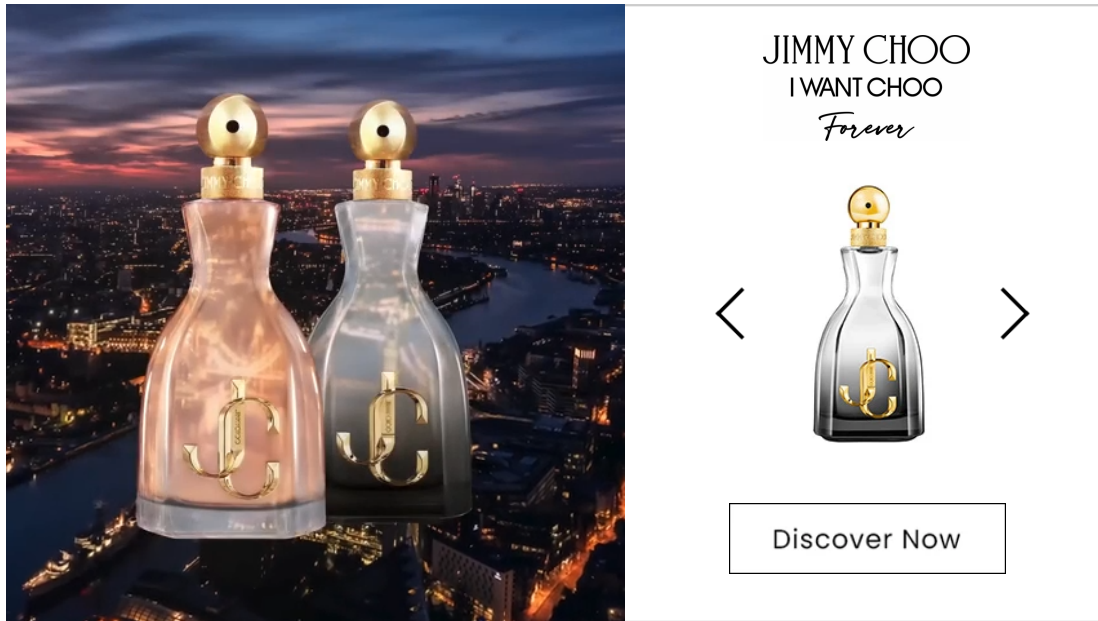


📷 Russia versus Iran, a soccer 'friendly' in Canberra. Picture Facebook

Campaigners against the Russian invasion of Ukraine called the two countries a "murderous partnership".

The actions of the governments of both countries are opposed by the Australian government, Russia for the invasion and Iran for a series of acts, including developing nuclear weapons and, more recently, backing fighters attacking western shipping.

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"The Albanese government is working deliberately and strategically to apply pressure on the Iranian regime for failing to uphold its international obligations, including its nuclear-related commitments," the Albanese government said last year.

Australia has sent military equipment to Ukraine to help it repel the invasion by Russia.

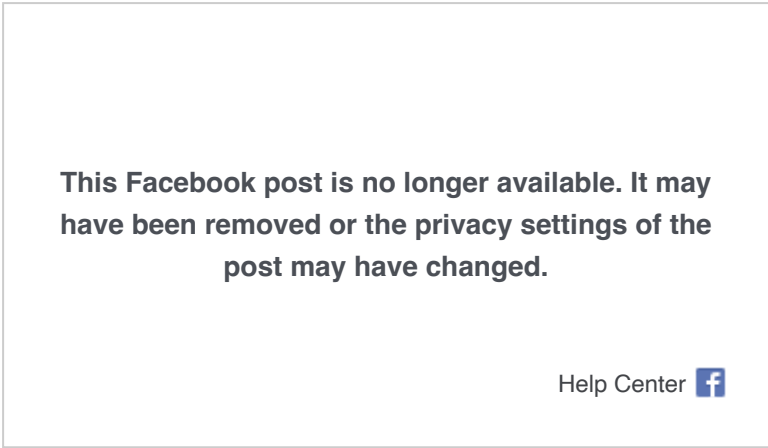
The "friendly" was condemned by Mr Romaniw of the Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations.

"The sight of Russian and Iranian diplomats getting together for a game of soccer in our nation's capital is sickening," he said.

"It's a slap in the face to all Ukrainians fighting on the front, and it must be condemned.

"Ukrainians who love sport, from kids to Olympians, don't have the luxury of such games anymore, as Russia uses Iranian missiles and drones to kill and maim Ukrainians every day.

"No soccer game can whitewash the atrocities these two regimes are responsible for in Ukraine.



"This is just another piece of propaganda from these countries' diplomats. The Russian and Iranian ambassadors should have been expelled a long time ago, as they represent regimes that fly in the face of our democratic values.

"There is nothing innocent about this soccer match, and Canberrans should be appalled by the dark, murderous partnership between Russia and Iran.

"Their arrogance and actions must be condemned."

The Russian embassy was approached for comment.

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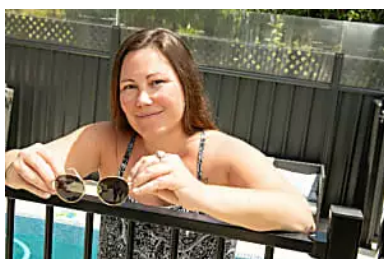
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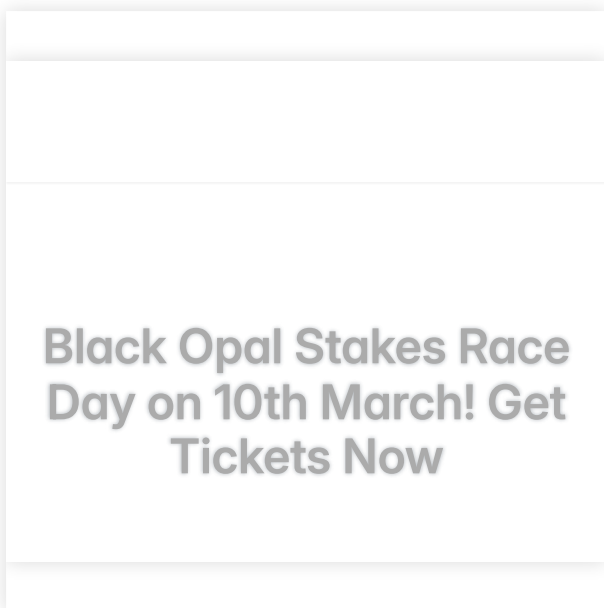
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