



BACKGROUNDER: WHY IOC 'NEUTRALITY' MODEL FOR RUSSIAN AND BELARUSIAN ATHLETES IS DEEPLY FLAWED

- **Impossible to guarantee Russian and Belarusian athletes are 'neutral' because they are predominantly funded by the state**
 - Russian athletes receive generous salaries and pensions from the state; benefit from state-based development and training programs and are part of the elite in Russia.
 - Many Russian athletes are associated with the sport clubs of the Russian Army and of state security agencies. Many trainers and coaches are similarly members of the Russian army. Many have military or other special ranks (see appendix).
 - At the 2022 Beijing Olympic Games, 88% of the medals won by Russia were won by sportspeople associated with the Russian army and state security agencies.
 - At the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, of the 71 medals won by Russia in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, 45 were won by athletes who were members of the Central Sports Club of the Russian Army.
- **Performance of athletes is weaponised by Russia, and provides platform for Russian soft power**
 - Attempt to detract from the brutality of Russia's war on Ukraine
 - Russia uses sport (and culture) to project Russian power and prestige. Participants and spectators are asked to momentarily forget the terror and violence, with the aim of lessening our resistance to Russia's conduct. Aim is to normalise Russian aggression.
 - In Russia, athletes are promoted as symbols of Russia's success if they produce results and win medals. This was evident in the neo-fascist, pro-war rally Putin held in Russia in March 2022, after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Russian athletes, including Alexander Bolshunov, the Averina sisters, Evgeny Rylov and Victoria Listunova appeared on stage at the rally wearing their Olympic medals and the genocidal Russian war symbol 'Z' on their clothing (see Appendix A).
 - Inclusion of athletes from Russia and Belarus at the 2024 Olympics equates to Nazi Germany promoting its regime during the 1936 Olympic Games.
- **Banning of flag and Russian symbols is unworkable in practice as evidenced at Australian Open**
 - Rules banning Russian symbols were flagrantly disobeyed by pro-Russian supporters (Russian flag, t-shirts with genocidal Russian war symbol 'Z') at the Australian Open. Used as rallying cry for Russian supporters, and opportunity to promote Russia on international sporting stage.
 - Pro-Russian agitators like Simeon Boikov (the Aussie Cossack) even offered \$1,000 to anyone who succeeded in getting Russian flag broadcast on TV.



- **Decision to allow Russian and Belarusian athletes discriminates against Ukrainian athletes**
 - The IOC has claimed that it is concerned about discrimination against Russian and Belarusian athletes and has stated 'No athlete should be prevented from competing just because of their passport'.
 - As said by Dmytro Kuleba, Foreign Affairs Minister of Ukraine: *Ukrainian athletes have been discriminated against by the Russian and Belarusian regimes exactly because of their passports.*
 - 220 Ukrainian athletes and coaches killed – incl. former Olympic youth figure skater [Dmytro Sharpar](#) and 11 year old gymnastics star, [Kateryna Diachenko](#), killed when her house was bombed in Mariupol (see Appendix B)
 - Over 340 Ukrainian sporting facilities destroyed
 - Ukrainian athletes cannot safely live and train in Ukraine
 - Psychological impact of war and impact on home, family
- **IOC has past precedent in banning teams from Olympic competition eg Germany/Japan, South African teams**
 - The IOC excluded teams from Germany and Japan to participate at the 1948 Olympics
 - The IOC excluded teams from the Olympic Games, like the South African team, from 1964-1988
 - The IOC argues that because there are no United Nations (UN) sanctions in place against Russia and Belarus, the comparison does not apply - Russia's veto power in the UN has prevented the ability of the UN to impose sanctions on Russia.
 - The UN has, however, passed resolutions condemning the Russian referendums in Ukraine, the invasion as illegal, and has deplored the humanitarian situation created by the invasion.
- **Olympic ideals incompatible with Russian aggression, violence, war crimes and crimes against humanity**
 - Respect for human rights and peaceful relations between nations are incompatible with the brutal and illegal Russian war against Ukraine, and Russian adventurism.
 - Since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, thousands of civilians have been killed; millions displaced, cities/towns destroyed and extensively damaged; deliberate targeting of energy infrastructure; global energy and food supplies destabilised; most serious challenge to the int. rules-based order since end of WW2.
 - During 2008 Beijing Olympics – Russia occupied part of Moldova; during 2014 Winter Paralympics Games in Sochi, Russia annexed Ukrainian Crimea and occupied parts of eastern Ukraine; close of 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, Russia launched full-scale invasion of Ukraine

Appendix follows





APPENDIX A: RUSSIAN ATHLETES AND TIES WITH THE MILITARY/STATE

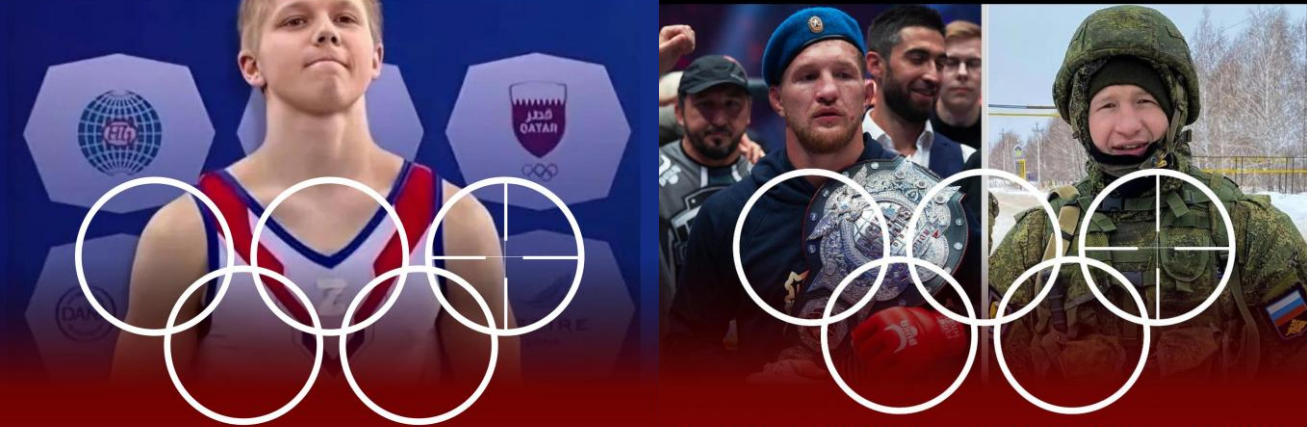
#BoycottRussianSport  #BoycottRussianSport 



Mariya Lasitskene, captain of the Russian army, medalist at the Tokyo Olympics

Sergey Shubenkov, yet another captain of the Russian army, trainee of the Central Army Sports Club

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Ivan Kuliak, a Russian gymnast, wearing the "Z" symbol during an international competition in Doha

Russian MMA fighter Vladimir Mineev happily accepted his mobilization summon and now fights alongside other Russian occupiers



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Russian Olympians on the Putin's rally
in support of the war against Ukraine
wearing "Z" symbols



Russian Olympians at Putin's rally in
support of the war against Ukraine



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APPENDIX B: SOME OF THE KILLED UKRAINIAN ATHLETES AND DESTROYED FACILITIES



WEIGHTLIFTING

Alina Perehudova

A 14-year-old weightlifter Alina Perehudova died during the shelling in the blockaded Mariupol.



BULLET SHOOTING

Ivan Bidniak

36-year-old Ivan Bidniak, an international class master of sports, European vice-champion in bullet shooting, died in the battles with the Russian occupiers in the Kherson region.



BOXING

Yaroslav Rudych

Boxer Yaroslav Rudych died after being seriously wounded in the war with Russia.



WAKO KICKBOXING

Yevhen Zvonok

Ukrainian WAKO kickboxer Yevhen Zvonok died in Chernihiv during shelling by the Russian occupiers.



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Ukrainians playing football on one of the stadiums in Kharkiv. It was bombed by the Russian army shortly before

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A girl in Kharkiv's swimming pool "Aquarena", destroyed by Russian shelling