

ICF Statement regarding measures for Russian and Belorussian athletes

29.04.23

The International Canoe Federation (ICF) strongly condemns Russia's breach of the Olympic Truce and its continued invasion of Ukraine. All military actions against a sovereign state contradict the unifying mission of the Olympic Movement.

The ICF stands united behind and supports the decision of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to maintain the sanctions imposed on the governments of Russia and Belarus.

Since the beginning of the Russian aggression, the ICF has supported the participation of the Ukrainian Canoe Federation and its athletes and officials in competitions across the international calendar and will continue to stand in solidarity with our Ukrainian friends throughout these tragic circumstances.

In March 2022, the ICF Executive Committee voted unanimously to suspend all Russian and Belarusian athletes and officials from participating in all ICF events until further notice in order to protect our competitions and to guarantee the safety of athletes, reflecting the [IOC Executive Board recommendation of 28 February 2022](#).

The ICF recognises the unifying role of sport and is a strong supporter of it, as well as strongly reiterating the separation of politics and sport. The ICF is fully in line with the Olympic Charter and supports that everyone should have access to international sporting competitions regardless of their origin, faith or sexual orientation.

In view of the current circumstances, the ICF Executive Board fully backs the [IOC Executive Board recommendations of 28 March 2023](#) and has decided to lift the protective measures against Russian and Belarusian athletes and highlighted the following key strict conditions ahead of appointing an independent panel:

- The athletes in question should be allowed to compete as 'Individual Neutral Athletes' across individual events. They will not be allowed to wear any signs, colours on their clothing or sportswear associated with Russian or Belarusian identity, flags or other symbols, or any objects or symbols identifying the athletes as Russian or Belarusian.
- Individual Neutral Athletes and support personnel who are contracted to the Russian or Belarusian military or national security agencies will not be able to participate as an individual neutral athlete.
- Only athletes who have not supported the war in public, on social media or on other occasions will be eligible to compete.
- In order to protect the implementation of ICF events and the safety of athletes the ICF will respect any position and decision of a National Canoe Federation as host of an ICF event not to include Individual Neutral Athletes. However, the ICF calls on all hosts of ICF competitions to respect the Olympic Charter and to establish conditions that guarantee unhindered access to competitions for all athletes.
- Only Individual Neutral Athletes who comply with the standards set out through the ICF Individual Neutral Athlete Eligibility Panel and ITA anti-doping criteria will be eligible to compete.
- Athletes who want to compete as neutral athletes will have to declare in writing that they meet all the criteria set by the ICF before their individual evaluation. Any violation of these conditions will result in the withdrawal of their Individual Neutral Athlete status.

The ICF will continue to collaborate closely with the IOC, ASOIF, and the ITA to determine the necessary anti-doping measures and neutral athlete status criteria. Furthermore, the appointment of an independent assessors to the Individual Neutral Athlete Eligibility Panel will be subject to a consultation process with important stakeholders and service providers before being confirmed by the ICF Executive Committee.

Following the receipt of a letter from the Russian Canoe Federation in March 2022, the ICF Executive Committee has decided to continue the suspension of Russian and Belarusian officials holding official positions within the Russian or Belarusian Canoe Federation or the respective NOC or NPC from participation in any ICF-sanctioned competitions or ICF bodies.

(ICF Board of Directors decision published 1 March 2022) <https://www.canoeicf.com/news/icf-suspends-russian-and-belarusian-athletes-and-officials>