

OPEN LETTER

Over 300 International Fencers Call on the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Fencing Federation (FIE) to Uphold the Ban on Russia and Belarus.

28 March 2023

To: Mr. Thomas Bach, President, International Olympic Committee
Mr. Emmanuel Katsiadakis, Interim President, International Fencing Federation

CC: Ms. Emma Terho, Chair, International Olympic Committee Athlete Commission
Mr. Rubén Limardo Gascon, Chair, International Fencing Federation Athlete Commission

Dear Mr. Bach, dear Mr. Katsiadakis,

In your roles as presidents of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Fencing Federation (FIE), we turn to you regarding your efforts to allow Russian and Belarusian athletes to compete again in international sporting competitions. With complete disregard for athletes' voices, you have permitted both Russia and Belarus back into FIE competitions, as well as a suspected tournament hosted on Russian soil. This is an apparent breach of the IOC's position that "no international sport events are to be organized or supported by an IF or NOC in Russia or Belarus" and once again exposes Russian interests outweighing the voice and rights of athletes, especially those from Ukraine.

Russia's aggression violates not only the norms of international law but also the fundamental values of Olympism, including peace, harmonious development of humankind and respect for human dignity and human rights. As long as Russia's war of aggression, aided by Belarus, wages on, both states' athletes and officials must remain excluded from world sport. Given the recent escalation of attacks against Ukrainian civilians, there should be no reason at this time to allow Russia and Belarus to be reintegrated into world sport. Integration would lay a precedent in which a nation can violate the values and rules of sport and international peace without fear of consequences.

To date, Russia's aggression on Ukraine has resulted in 232 athletes being killed, 343 sport facilities being destroyed, 40,000 athletes forced abroad, and 140,000 young athletes left without sport facilities. The international community is acutely aware that for Russian and Belarusian athletes, there is no distinction between the athlete and the state. Not only have these athletes been encouraged to fight in the war by the Russian Olympic Committee, with a large majority of them holding military and law enforcement positions, but they are also beneficiaries of state funding – drawing their pay from Putin's war chest and thus making any separation between the state and the athlete implausible. Athletes were and will be instrumentalized for Putin's propaganda. Competing under a neutral flag has not proven to be a suitable sanctioning instrument in the past and is not suitable now.

Furthermore, the UN Special Rapporteurs' [communication](#) that the IOC refers to in their statements seems to lack a thorough human rights assessment. In contrast, a [recently released expert report by Prof. Patricia Wiater](#), Chair of Public Law, International Law and Human Rights at the Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuremberg, concluded that a collective exclusion of the Russian athletes is permissible and, despite unequal treatment, is not to be assessed as a violation of international prohibitions of discrimination. In addition, opinion polls, as recently used by the IOC, are not suitable methods to decide about the rights and the protection needs of the Ukrainian athletes, nor are they suitable to determine the admissibility of collective exclusions.

We believe that sport must find answers for dealing with states who violate the values of sport, who intentionally use sport as a political instrument, and who break international and human rights laws. We understand that the IOC and the International Sports Federations are walking a fine line with sanctions

and exclusions, given the unifying and peacemaking mission of sport. Its political neutrality is fundamental for sport to protect itself from instrumentalization and to be globally active as far as possible. However, this neutrality must not be used as an excuse to accept and possibly even tolerate serious violations of universally accepted human rights.

On behalf of over 300 active and former fencing athletes, we call on you in your leadership capacity of the IOC to uphold your recommended suspensions of the Russian and Belarusian Fencing Federations and National Olympic Committees and ensure the FIE adheres to your guidelines. Any suspension must reject the notion of neutrality and include the banning of all Russian and Belarusian athletes from international sport, including hosting events, qualifying for, and competing at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games until Russia withdraws completely from Ukrainian territory. We also expect an unequivocal commitment to support and protect peaceful anti-war protests and expressions of solidarity with Ukraine by athletes at international competitions.

The recent events in fencing remain alarming. The FIE's perceived allowance for Russia to host a tournament in Moscow is a clear breach of the already weak IOC guidelines and the return of Russian athletes to international competitions has forced the Ukrainian victims of the war to retreat while the aggressor is courted on his way back to the world sporting stage. Because of this ignorance on the part of the FIE and National Fencing Federations, it is once again the athletes who bear the responsibility and are being pushed into individual deliberations about boycott decisions. Athletes are left alone in this chaos. This irresponsibility continues to risk collateral damage to those who speak out against the war, stay away from competitions out of conviction, and may even forgo opportunities for qualification and funding.

The FIE is not fulfilling its duty of care for athletes, especially for Ukrainians. Your insufficient leadership in completely banning Russia and Belarus is being called out by athletes and civil society across the globe. You have chosen Russian and Belarusian interests over the rights of athletes, notably Ukrainian athletes, and by doing so, you are failing to support the very people your organizations are meant to support. This egregious, unprovoked war and its breach of the Olympic Truce cannot be ignored or rewarded. Returning to business as usual would be a catastrophic error and thus we again urge you to uphold the suspensions of Russia and Belarus.

On behalf of,

300+ International Fencers

Supported by Athleten Deutschland and Global Athlete



GLOBAL  ATHLETE

Initial list of signatories as of March 28, 2023

1. Léa Krueger, Germany, Sabre, Active
2. Stef De Greef, Belgium, Foil, Active
3. Lee Kiefer, USA, Foil, Active
4. David van Nunen, The Netherlands, Epee, Active
5. Michal Siess, Poland, Foil, Active
6. Mikolaj Rudnicki, Poland, Foil, Active
7. Leszek Rajski, Poland, Foil, Active
8. Piotr Kaskow, Poland, Foil, Active
9. Tomasz Cieply, Poland, Foil, Retired
10. Jan Jurkiewicz, Poland, Foil, Active
11. Maciej Bem, Poland, Foil, Active
12. Piotr Janda, Poland, Foil, Active

13. Piotr Borowiec, Poland, Foil, Active
14. Jan Zakrzewski, Poland, Foil, Active
15. Adam Jakubowski, Poland, Foil, Active
16. Sylwia Matuszak, Poland, Sabre, Active
17. Auriane Mallo, France, Epee, Active
18. Anne Kirsch, Germany, Foil, Active
19. Tristan Tulen, The Netherlands, Epee, Active
20. Małgorzata Zawodniak, Poland, Sabre, Active
21. Ruben Derksen, The Netherlands, Epee, Active
22. Peter Bitsch, Germany, Epee, Active
23. Olena Kryvytska, Ukraine, Epee, Active
24. Manon Brunet, France, Sabre, Active
25. Francesca Russo, USA, Sabre, Active
26. Lara Goldmann, Germany, Epee, Active
27. Olga Kharlan, Ukraine, Sabre, Active
28. Malina Vongsavady, France, Sabre, Active
29. Alina Komashchuk, Ukraine, Sabre, Active
30. Angelika Wator, Poland, Sabre, Active
31. André Sanita, Germany, Foil, Active
32. Max Hartung, Germany, Sabre, Retired
33. Martin Rubes, Czech Republic, Epee, Active
34. Luigi Samele, Italy, Sabre, Active
35. Yuriy, Tsap, Sabre, Ukraine, Active
36. Marta Okine, Poland, Sabre, Active
37. Anne Bultynck, Belgium, Epee, Active
38. Olaf Stasiak, Poland, Sabre, Active
39. Wiliam Deary, Great Britain, Sabre, Active
40. Jessica Corby, Great Britain, Sabre, Active
41. Deniz Selin Ünlüdağ, Turkey, Sabre, Active
42. Malgorzata Kozaczuk, Poland, Sabre, Active
43. Caitlin Maxwell, Great Britain, Sabre, Active
44. Ann-Sophie Kindler, Germany, Sabre, Retired
45. Gabriella Page, Canada, Sabre, Active
46. Jakub Broniszewski, Poland, Sabre, Active
47. Julieta Toledo, Mexico, Sabre, Active
48. Samuel Allen, Great-Britain, Sabre, Active
49. Myroniuk Dariia, Ukraine, Foil, Active
50. Julika Funke, Germany, Sabre, Active
51. Jake Hurst, Great Britain, Foil, Active
52. Budenko Kateryna, Ukraine, Foil, Active
53. Morgun Nadiia, Ukraine, Foil, Active
54. Laurenz Rieger, Germany, Foil, Active
55. Mathieu Nijs, Belgium, Foil, Active
56. Bryzgalova Svitlana, Ukraine, Foil, Active
57. Spyrydonova Polina, Ukraine, Epee, Active
58. Fatma Zehra Köse, Turkey, Sabre, Retired
59. Nisanur Erbil, Turkey, Sabre, Active
60. Aylin Çakır, Turkey, Sabre, Retired
61. Marta Mech, Poland, Foil, Active
62. Kim Kirschen, Germany, Foil, Active
63. Gerek Meinhardt, USA, Foil, Active
64. Alexander Massialas, USA, Foil, Active
65. Sidarth Kumbha, USA, Foil, Active
66. Chase Emmer, USA, Foil, Active
67. Adam Mathieu, USA, Foil, Active
68. Marcello Olivares, USA, Foil, Active

69. Jacqueline Dubrovich, USA, Foil, Active
70. Brian Kaneshige, USA, Foil, Retired
71. Sopit Olga, Ukraine, Foil, Active
72. Leon Cao, USA, Foil, Active
73. Misaki Emura, Japan, Sabre Active
74. Kanae Kobayashi, Japan, Sabre, Active
75. Judith Kusian, Germany, Sabre Retired
76. Ksawery Czajkowski, Poland, Sabre, Active
77. Matthias Willau, Austria, Sabre, Active
78. Harry Bird, Great Britain, Foil, Active
79. Coline Suzanne, France, Sabre, Active
80. Dagmara Wozniak, USA, Sabre, Active
81. Anna Limbach, Germany, Sabre, Active
82. Larissa Eifler, Germany, Sabre, Active
83. Margaux Rifkiss, France, Sabre, Active
84. Sarah Balzer, France, Sabre, Active
85. Kelly Lusinier, France, Sabre, Active
86. Caroline Queroli, France, Sabre, Active
87. Darya Varfolomeyeva, Ukraine, Epee, Active
88. Vlada Kharkova, Ukraine, Epee, Active
89. Volodymyr Stankevich, Ukraine, Epee, Active
90. Poloziuk Alina, Ukraine, Foil, Active
91. Diego Cervantes, Mexico, Foil, Active
92. Svitlana Sopit, Ukraine, Foil, Active
93. Anne Sauer, Germany, Foil, Active
94. Borysova Ahlaia, Ukraine, Foil, Active
95. Brynmor Saunders, Great Britain, Sabre Active
96. Kira Pron, Ukraine, Foil, Active
97. Jadryn Dick, Ireland, Sabre, Active
98. Margherita Guzzi Vincenti, USA, Epee, Active
99. Abbas Fadel, USA, Epee, Active
100. Harry Bird, Great Britain, Foil, Active
101. Chyzhykova Yelyzaveta, Ukraine, Foil, Active
102. Platonov Bogdan, Ukraine, Sabre, Active
103. Maximilian Kindler, Germany, Sabre, Retired
104. Statsenko Oleksii, Ukraine, Sabre, Active
105. Bohovin Bohdan, Ukraine, Sabre, Active
106. Andrzej Rzadkowski, Poland, Foil, Active
107. Humen Vasyl, Ukraine, Sabre, Active
108. Karakai Oleksandr, Ukraine, Sabre, Active
109. Oleksandra Budenko, Ukraine, Foil, Active
110. Aube Vandingenen Belgium, Active
111. Elvira Mårtensson, Sweden, Epee, Active
112. Dermenzhy Valentyna, Ukraine, Foil, Active
113. Svitlana Bryzgalova, Ukraine, Foil, Active
114. Stefani Deschner, Foil, USA, Active
115. Yagodka Andriy, Ukraine, Sabre, Active
116. Carlos Padua, Puerto Rico, Foil, Active
117. Tobias Reichetzer, Austria, Foil, Active
118. Lilli Brugger, Austria, Foil, Active
119. Filip Płocharski, Poland, Foil, Retired
120. Viktoriia Horpenchenko, Ukraine, Foil, Active
121. Christiana Wohlgemuth-Engel, Austria, Epee, Active
122. Adrian Wojtkowiak, Poland, Foil, Active
123. Szymon Czartoryjski, Poland, Foil, Active
124. Julia Walczyk, Poland, Foil, Active

125. Martyna Synoradzka, Poland, Foil, Active
126. Karolina Zurawska, Poland, Foil, Active
127. Dominika Wasilczuk, Poland, Foil, Active
128. Kaja Jablonowska, Poland, Foil, Active
129. Martyna Jelinska, Poland, Foil, Active
130. Aleksandra Jeglinska, Poland, Foil, Active
131. Aleksandra Wieczorek, Poland, Foil, Active
132. William Sturgeon, Great Britain, Epee, Active
133. Halina Ptak, Poland, Foil, Retired
134. Michael Jacob, Ireland, Sabre, Active
135. Paula Schmidl, Austria, Epee, Active
136. Leonie Ebert, Germany, Foil, Active
137. Bolade Apithy, France, Sabre, Active
138. Krzysztof Kaczkowski, Poland, Sabre, Active
139. Kamila Pytka, Poland, Epee, Active
140. Renata Knapik-Miazga, Poland, Epee, Active
141. Samko Anastasiia, Ukraine, Epee, Active
142. Magdalena Pawlowska, Poland, Epee, Active
143. Emily Kurth, Germany, Sabre, Active
144. Le Pechoux Erwann, France, Foil, Retired
145. Anna Mroszczak, Poland, Epee, Active
146. Fabian Braun, Germany, Foil, Active
147. Philip Meixner, Austria, Sabre, Active
148. Kristjan Archer, Great Britain, Foil, Active
149. Luana Pekelman, Brazil, Sabre, Active
150. Augusto Servello, Argentina Foil, Active
151. Benjamin Steffen, Epee, Switzerland, Retired
152. Andrii Cherkashy, Foil, Ukraine, Active
153. James Honeybone, Great Britain, Sabre, Retired
154. Kate Beardmore, Great Britain, Foil, Active
155. Alexandre Ehler, Germany, Epee, Active
156. Ricarda Multerer, Germany, Epee, Active
157. Laura Wetzker, Germany, Epee, Active
158. Lara Goldmann, Germany, Epee, Active
159. Yasmin Campbell, Great Britain, Foil, Active
160. Martin Kain, Austria, Foil, Active
161. Maximilian Ettelt, Austria, Foil, Active
162. Larysa Pavlenko, Ukraine, Foil, Retired
163. Vladislav Skalii, Ukraine, Foil, Active
164. Kristina Kulyk, Ukraine, Foil, Active
165. Marianna Syzareva, Ukraine, Foil, Active
166. Artem Korzhovoi, Ukraine, Foil, Active
167. Maksym Korzhovoi, Ukraine, Foil, Active
168. Mykyta Astashov, Ukraine, Foil, Active
169. Yelyzar Dyrda, Ukraine, Foil, Active
170. Iryna Zykova, Ukraine, Foil, Retired
171. Igor Dovzhenko, Ukraine, Foil, Retired
172. Mykhailo Hurin, Ukraine, Foil, Active
173. Daniil Tkach Ukraine, Foil, Active
174. Maksym Levytskyi, Ukraine, Foil, Active
175. Kaito Streets, Japan, Sabre, Active
176. Nicole Ross, USA, Foil, Retired
177. Alice Recher, France, Foil, Active
178. Jamie Craze, Great Britain, Sabre, Active
179. Billy Shepherd, Great Britain, Epee, Active
180. Rafaël Tulen, The Netherlands, Epee, Active

181. Emma Fransson, Sweden, Epee, Active
182. Leandra Behr, Germany, Foil, Active
183. Moritz Renner, Germany, Foil, Active
184. Benjamin Andrews, Epee, Great Britain, Active
185. Matthew Cooper, Epee, Great Britain, Active
186. Lexie Craze, Great Britain, Sabre, Active
187. Bethany Brierley, Great Britain, Sabre, Active
188. Sebastian Silva, Great Britain, Sabre, Active
189. Paul Dinkel, Great Britain, Sabre, Active
190. Joshua Maxwell, Great Britain, Sabre, Active
191. Isabella Gill, Great Britain, Foil, Active
192. Maria Chart, Great Britain, Sabre, Active
193. Julian Kulozik, Germany, Epee, Active
194. Robert Schmier, Germany, Epee, Active
195. David Williams, Great Britain, Foil, Active
196. Galya Pundyk, Ukraine, Sabre, Retired
197. Nzingha Prescod, USA, Foil, Retired
198. Pawel Kawiecki, Poland, Foil, Retired
199. Nicolaus Benedict, Austria, Sabre, Active
200. Curtis Miller, Great Britain, Sabre, Active
201. Stefano Luccetti, Argentina, Sabre, Active
202. Johannes Poscharnig, Austria, Foil, Active
203. Freya Cenker, Austria, Foil, Active
204. Mika Ehringhaus, Germany, Epee, Active
205. Ester Schreiber, Sweden, Foil, Active
206. Eva Steffens, Germany, Epee, Active
207. Julius Ruppenthal, Germany, Epee, Active
208. Jean-Philippe Patrice, France, Sabre, Active
209. Sebastian Patrice, France, Sabre, Active
210. Erica Cipressa, Italy, Foil, Active
211. Sergei Golubitsky, Ukraine, Foil, Retired
212. Kate Daykin, Great Britain, Sabre, Active
213. Hinterseer Moritz, Austria, Foil, Retired
214. Henrik Lundegard, Sweden, Foil, Retired
215. Alex Sells, Australia, Epee, Active
216. Raúl Lenderink, Netherlands, Epee, Active
217. Jasper Videler, Netherlands, Epee, Active
218. Anastasiia Lytvyniuk, Ukraine, Epee, Active
219. Sara Mikulak, Sweden, Foil, Active
220. Zeb Visser, The Netherlands, Epee, Active
221. Niko Vuorinen, Finland, Epee, Active
222. Matthijs de Vries, The Netherlands, Epee, Retired
223. Felix Petrini, Sweden, Foil, Active
224. Rorik Janssen, The Netherlands, Foil, Epee, Retired
225. Jaakko Paavolainen, Finland, Epee, Active
226. Patrick Jørgensen, Denmark, Epee, Active
227. Conrad Kongstad, Denmark, Epee, Active
228. August Jensen, Denmark, Epee, Active
229. Mia Maja Jørgensen, Denmark, Epee, Active
230. Arthur Nepomuk Grosse, Epee, Active
231. Marcus Brobakken, Norway, Epee, Active
232. Konrad Veenenbos, The Netherlands, Epee, Active
233. Benjamin Humlen Dahlbo, Norway, Epee, Active
234. Olav Eikanger, Norway, Epee, Active
235. Vilde Tengesdal, Norway, Epee, Active
236. Didrik Nordtveit, Norway, Epee, Active

237. Michalis Kirimlidis, Ireland, Sabre, Active
238. Malte Trier Mørch, Denmark, Foil, Coach
239. Amy Radford, Great Britain, Epee, Active
240. Calum Johnston, Great Britain, Epee, Active
241. Danielle Lawson, Great Britain, Epee, Active
242. James Russell, Great Britain, Epee, Active
243. Pauline Brunner, Switzerland, Epee, Active
244. Aurore Favre, Switzerland, Epee, Active
245. Virginia Romeo, Switzerland, Epee, Active
246. Noemi Moeschlin, Switzerland, Epee, Active
247. Fiona Hatz, Switzerland, Epee, Active
248. Angeline Favre, Switzerland, Epee, Active
249. Valentina Bos, Switzerland, Epee, Active
250. Maria Kränkl, Austria, Foil, Active
251. Otthar Andreas Nordvik Krohn, Norway, Epee, Active
252. Ewa Trzebinska, Poland, Epee, Active
253. Barbara Rutz, Poland, Epee, Active
254. Martyna Swatowska-Wenglarczyk, Poland, Epee, Active
255. Paulina Wilaszek, Poland, Epee, Active
256. Richard Hübers, Germany, Sabre, Retired
257. Anna Salminen, Finland, Epee, Active
258. Dan Kellner, USA, Foil, Retired
259. Karen Moreno, Chile, Sabre, Active
260. Juvenal Alarcon, Chile, Foil, Active
261. Pablo Nuñez, Sabre, Chile, Active
262. Toshiya Saito, Japan, Foil, Active
263. Yana Botvinnik, Israel, Epee, Active
264. Nastia Conrad, Ukraine, Epee, Active
265. Enver Yildirim, Turkey, Sabre, Active
266. Sebastian Persson, Sweden, Foil, Active
267. Kano Minami, Japan, Foil, Active
268. Karin Miyawaki, Japan, Foil, Active
269. Inka Mikkilä, Finland, Epee, Active
270. Anna Vuorinen, Finland, Epee, Active
271. Sara Salminen, Finland, Epee, Active
272. Anni Vornanen, Finland, Epee, Active
273. Alexander Lahtinen, Finland, Epee, Retired
274. Suvi Lehtonen, Finland, Epee, Active
275. Outi Jaakkola, Finland, Epee, Active
276. Eva Hautala, Finland, Epee, Active
277. Julius Jutila, Finland, Epee, Active
278. Väinö Paavolainen, Finland, Epee, Active
279. Hernández Elena, Spain, Sabre, Active
280. Gallardo Itziar, Spain, Sabre, Active
281. Pérez Ainhoa, Spain, Sabre, Active
282. Lucia Martín-Portugués, Spain, Sabre, Active
283. Ventura María, Spain, Sabre, Active
284. Navarro Araceli, Spain, Sabre, Active
285. Montoya Paula, Spain, Sabre, Active
286. Cecilia Berder, France, Sabre, Active
287. Wojciech Lubieniecki, Poland, Epee, Active
288. Alexander Crutchett, Great Britain, Sabre, Retired
289. Lisa Gette, Germany, Sabre, Active
290. Ville Sani, Finland, Epee, Active
291. Burkhard Isabelle, Switzerland, Epee, Active
292. Anasiz Muhammed, Turkey, Active

293. Aslan Tolga, Turkey, Active
294. Yaman Furkan, Turkey, Active
295. Taflan Ahmet Turgut, Turkey, Active
296. Perez Cuenca, Celia, Spain, Active
297. Ozaki, Seri, Japan, Sabre, Active
298. Webb Jonathan, Great Britain, Sabre, Active
299. Schneider Daria, USA, Sabre, Active
300. Chamberlain Maia Chan, USA, Sabre Active
301. Brind'Amour Pamela, Canada, Sabre
302. Thurgood Madison, Canada, Sabre, Active
303. Ponich Marissa, Canada, Sabre, Active
304. French Dylan, Canada, Epee, Active
305. Van Haaster Maximilien, Canada, Foil, Active
306. Page Gabriella, Canada, Sabre, Active
307. Lili Pulla, Finland, Epee, Active
308. Shaul Gordon, Canada, Sabre, Active
309. Jiří Beran, Czech Republic, Epee, Active
310. Moa Lundell, Finland, Epee, Active
311. Juha-Matti Lundell, Finland, Sabre, Epee, Foil, Retired
312. Emily Mason, Canada, Epee, Active
313. Martin Roth Kronwall, Sweden, Foil, Coach
314. Jonathan Hutchinson, Canada, Epee, Retired
315. Marie-Rose Huellas-Bruskiewicz, Canada, Epee, Active
316. Anonymous, Foil, Active
317. Anonymous, Foil, Active
318. Anonymous, Foil, Active
319. Anonymous, Poland, Sabre, Retired
320. Anonymous, Foil, Retired
321. Anonymous, Foil, Active
322. Anonymous, Foil, Active
323. Anonymous, Epee, Active