



Prot. n. 27/23

Milan, Italy
7th August, 2023

SUBJECT: WKSF vs IOC

SUBJECT: Update WKSF against the conflict Russia-Ukraine and WKSF responsibilities

The WKSF still following the conflict of Russia-Ukraine very carefully and following the IOC Guidelines.

After the United Nations recommendations to the IOC at 1st February of 2023, to consider Individual Athletes from Russia and Belarus to take part in international competitions as neutral athletes, the WKSF Board Direction **decided to remain the decision to forbid** any athlete with Russia or Belarus passport to participate at any WKSF Agenda 2023 Event. **Until nowadays, the WKSF remains the decision**. However, the position of WKSF, as a non-governmental organization, as a sport international organization, must take care of all athletes and must follow the IOC orientations.

The WKSF, as an IF with more than 65 members, must keep the distance between POLITICAL positions, HUMAN RIGHTS and ATHLETE DREAMS. The dream of each athlete must be respected, the individual person must be respected, without any discrimination of race, gender, culture, religion and nationality. More than 30 army conflict around the globe still active in 2023, from ethnic violence, terrorism, civil war, religion or political is something that WKSF condemn at 100%. However, but the WKSF believes that the sport can be a way of unification of people and Human Beings with the hope of a global peace.

The WKSF understand it is a difficult position for all, in our sport with all Kettlebell Sport history with the epicenter of all culture of our sport in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and several countries in its borders, it increase a difficulty to accept the war and to do not see the end of the conflict.

With a very clear position of WKSF during all this period and to follow the IOC guidelines, the Ukraine team and respective athletes have been receiving several supports of WKSF. From WKSF, the Ukraine Team received 1 free entry/athlete and some merchandising funds, as T-Shirts at WC2022 and directly from WKSF.



WHAT IS THE IOC POSITION?

At March 2023, the IOC released new guidelines to all Russian-Belarus athletes. Until March, we can read as the main important guidelines:

- i. no international sports events be organised in Russia and Belarus;*
- ii. no flag, anthems or other national symbols whatsoever should be displayed at any international sports events; and*
- iii. no government or state officials should be accredited for or invited to any international sports events.*

These sanctions taked place in February 2022 and it remained. However, a new guidelines of IOC to all IF were released:

- 1. Athletes with a Russian or a Belarusian passport must compete only as Individual Neutral Athletes.*
- 2. Teams of athletes with a Russian or Belarusian passport cannot be considered.*
- 3. Athletes who actively support the war cannot compete. Support personnel who actively support the war cannot be entered.*
- 4. Athletes who are contracted to the Russian or Belarusian military or national security agencies cannot compete. Support personnel who are contracted to the Russian or Belarusian military or national security agencies cannot be entered.*
- 5. Any such Individual Neutral Athlete, like all the other participating athletes, must meet all anti-doping requirements applicable to them and particularly those set out in the anti-doping rules of the IFs.*
- 6. The sanctions against those responsible for the war, the Russian and Belarusian states and governments, must remain in place:*
 - a. No international sports events organised or supported by an IF or NOC in Russia or Belarus.*



- b. No flag, anthem, colours or any other identifications whatsoever of these countries displayed at any sports event or meeting, including the entire venue.*
- c. No Russian and Belarusian government or state official can be invited to or accredited for any international sports event or meeting.*

However, there are a few conditions/guidelines to be respected by all:

2. With regard to the solidarity with Ukrainian athletes and the Ukrainian Olympic community, there was also unanimous support to:

- a. Continue and even strengthen the full and unwavering commitment to solidarity with the Ukrainian athletes and the Ukrainian Olympic community in order to have a strong team from the NOC of Ukraine at the Olympic Games Paris 2024 and the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026.*
- b. Encourage all IFs, NOCs and sports event organisers to undertake all possible efforts to facilitate the training, preparation and participation of Ukrainian athletes in international sports events.*

3. With regard to the individual athletes with Russian or Belarusian passports, the vast majority of the participants in each of the consultation calls expressed the following:

- a. Strong commitment to the unifying mission of the Olympic Movement, requesting and encouraging it to live up to this unifying mission, particularly in these times of division, confrontation and war.*
- b. Respect the rights of all athletes to be treated without any discrimination, in accordance with the Olympic Charter. Governments must not decide which athletes can participate in which competition and which athletes cannot.*



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- c. *No athlete should be prevented from competing just because of their passport.*
- d. *A pathway for athletes' participation in competition under strict conditions should therefore be further explored.*
- e. *Such strict conditions being:*
 - i. *athletes would participate in competitions as "neutral athletes" and in no way represent their state or any other organisation in their country, as is already happening in professional leagues, particularly in Europe, the United States and Canada, and in some individual professional sports.*
 - ii. *only athletes who fully respect the Olympic Charter would participate. This means in particular: first, only those who have not acted against the peace mission of the IOC by actively supporting the war in Ukraine could compete. Second, only athletes who fully comply with the World Anti-Doping Code and all relevant anti-doping rules and regulations would be eligible. There must be individual checks carried out for all entered athletes.*
- f. *In the event of any athlete failing to respect the eligibility criteria or failing to respect the strict participation conditions as set out above, the IF and/or the sports event organiser concerned should immediately remove them from the competition, suspend them from further competitions and report the incident to the IOC for its consideration for further measures and sanctions.*
- g. *Welcomed and appreciated the offer from the Olympic Council of Asia to give these athletes access to Asian competitions.*



WHAT IS THE WKSF POSITION IN 2023?

The **WKSF continue to forbid** athletes, WKSF judge or WKSF staff with Russian or Belarus passport to participate at WKSF events.

CAN WKSF BE A COURT?

CAN WKSF FORBID ANY CITIZEN TO BE AT WKSF EVENTS?

There are 2 main guidelines very important to understand.

*“Athletes who **are contracted to the Russian or Belarusian military or national security***

***agencies** cannot compete. Support personnel who are contracted to the Russian or Belarusian military or national security agencies cannot be entered.”*

*“athletes would participate in competitions as “neutral athletes” and in **no way represent their state or any other organisation in their country**, as is already happening in professional leagues, particularly in Europe, the United States and Canada, and in some individual professional sports.”*

These 2 situations are very clear and the WKSF position during 2023 remains, the WKSF understand the IOC, the UN position and will follow very carefully these 2 guidelines. **Individual Athletes with dreams, without any governmental, political, army or governmental security must continue out of international sport competition?**

And the normal citizens, with Russian and Belarus Passports that are or live out of homeland? citizens, sportsmen, workers, etc. also have passports from Russia and Belarus and show up at any WKSF event?



Citizens with Russian or Belarus passport, living at any country where WKSF has an affiliated or host an official WKSF competition , the WKSF cannot forbid the free entry as spectator, to take any photo with the WKSF logo on background, etc..

As the WKSF cannot forbid any athlete to have a Russian or Belarus coach, as well. Also, the WKSF do not accept, following the IOC Guidelines, that any political organization or government do not accept any citizen to be at WKSF event.

The WKSF or any WKSF Official Member **is not responsible for any citizen living in any country, without any responsibility with the conflict, to follow the WKSF events, watch, take any photo, publish or share at any social media.**

The President,
Ilika Oleh

