



WOA upholds athletes right to compete and launches Ukraine Appeal

The World Olympians Association Executive Committee has met and discussed the situation in Ukraine and the ramifications for sport and in particular the Olympic Movement.

The WOA Executive Committee decided that the fundamental principles of Olympism as outlined in principles 4 and 6 of the Olympic Charter should be respected at all times and that the right of Olympians and athletes as individuals to participate in sporting events must be upheld and promoted.

This echoes the “Declaration of Support for the Olympic Charter” signed by Olympians from all five continents at WOA's World Olympians Forum in 2015 in which they pledged "to oppose any political or governmental interference in the autonomy of sports organisations which might prevent an athlete from exercising their right to compete in the Olympic Games or other major sporting events which also embody the Olympic spirit."

The WOA Executive Committee understands and respects the recommendation of the IOC which stated that “in order to protect the integrity of global sports competitions and for the safety of all the participants, the IOC EB recommends that International Sports Federations and sports event organisers not invite or allow the participation of Russian and Belarusian athletes and officials in international competitions.”

However, WOA strongly believes that decisions on whether to compete or not should be left to each individual athlete and should be based on the fundamental principles of the Olympic Charter.

Responding to a call from the Ukrainian Olympians community for funds to help with humanitarian aid for Olympians in Ukraine and to help rebuild sport in their country, the WOA Executive Committee decided to set up the **#OlympiansforUkraine** appeal.

World Olympians Association President Joel Bouzou OLY said: *“Olympians are a worldwide community of athletes who have lived and competed together at the Olympic Games and who have bonded into a lifelong family bound by the principles and values of the Olympic Movement. When our fellow Olympians ask for help, we will do what we can. That’s why we set up **#OlympiansforUkraine** and why in the past we helped Sierra Leone and Liberia with our **#TargetEbola** campaign and why we have our NOA grants programme.”*

Ukraine Olympians Association President Nina Umanets OLY said in a letter to WOA President Joel Bouzou OLY: *“The Ukrainian Olympians Association and I personally sincerely thank you for your solidarity and support to the Olympic community of Ukraine and all Ukrainian people in these hard and tragic times...Your support as well as the support of the rest of the world is very important and extremely needed for us.”*

The **#OlympiansforUkraine** appeal will be launched next week. Visit www.olympians.org to find out more.

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About the World Olympians Association

[WOA](#) is an IOC recognised organisation supporting the 100,000 Olympians worldwide. Its remit is to work for the benefit of all Olympians at all stages of their lives, empowering them to serve society and help make the world a better place through sport. With member National Olympians Associations spread across all five continents, WOA provides support to Olympian-run events and projects based on the Olympic ideals laid down by the founder of the modern Olympic Games, Pierre de Coubertin.

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