

President of Ukraine

February __, 2023

Kyiv

Dear Mr Director General!

On my own behalf and on behalf of Ukrainian athletes, I express my sincere gratitude to you for your support in resisting Russian terror and the encroachment of the terrorist state on the international legal order.

We highly appreciate and will remember everyone who came to the aid of Ukraine and did not stay away from the most important battle for freedom of our time. The global coalition for the defense of freedom now unites the world majority.

We hail Global Athlete as an international movement that inspires and advocates for positive change in global sport. Sports and Olympic principles always reveal and enhance the best in human nature, helping different countries and peoples to integrate into the international community based on civilized rules and mutual respect.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has been going on for more than 11 months. Our people are now heroically defending their homeland, defending not only the independence of our state but also the values of every civilized nation that respects freedom, democracy, and human rights.

Russian terror against Ukrainian towns and villages continues every day and night. A few days ago, Russian missiles fired at multi-storey residential buildings, a post office, a bus station, and a clinical hospital in the city of Kherson. Once again, Russian missiles hit Kharkiv, also residential buildings. Both attacks took the lives of our people. And there are dozens of such Russian attacks every day.

I would like to note that during this time more than 220 Ukrainian athletes and coaches have already died, and more than 343 sports facilities have been destroyed.

Criminal aggression is actively supported by Russian and Belarusian athletes, who openly demonstrate it in numerous photos and videos, acting as war propagandists. The majority of Russian athletes belong to law enforcement agencies, and a large number are officers of the military formations of Russia, so they directly share the responsibility for the horrific crimes committed today against the Ukrainian people, for the destroyed enterprises, schools, hospitals, and sports infrastructure. And most importantly - for the lost human lives and ruined fates of Ukrainians.

The Russian federation has already three times violated the resolutions on the Olympic Truce adopted by the UN General Assembly.

In 2008, during the official opening ceremony of the XXIX Summer Olympic Games in Beijing, Russia carried out military aggression against Georgia. During the Winter Paralympic Games in Sochi in 2014, it seized the Ukrainian Crimea and part of Donbas. During the Paralympics in Beijing on February 24, 2022, with the active support of Belarus, it launched a large-scale invasion of the territory of our Motherland and is still waging a war to destroy the Ukrainian people.

A terrorist state seeks to use all propaganda and other tools available to try to justify aggression. International sports competitions and the Olympic movement will inevitably be used by Russia to create the impression that international sports structures and all those who support them are ready to turn a blind eye to terror or forgive Russian aggression.

Russia is using its athletes to promote war and try to justify terror if they are allowed to participate in international competitions and the XXIII Summer Olympic Games in Paris.

We welcome Global Athlete's public statement condemning the resolution "On solidarity with Ukraine, sanctions against Russia and Belarus and the status of athletes from these countries" approved by the Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee on January 25, 2023. I hope that more and more athletes from all over the world will join this anti-war platform and support Ukrainian athletes in their efforts to force the IOC to protect human rights and peace.

Ukraine insists on continuing the fundamental protection of universal human values at all levels of world sports, and therefore on the need to prohibit the participation of Russian and Belarusian athletes in international competitions in any status, including the so-called neutral, until the end of Russian aggression, the full restoration of the international legal order, complete withdrawal of Russian terrorist troops from Ukraine.

Once again expressing my gratitude for your support, I wish you, Mr Director General, peace, good health, inspiration and success in all your endeavors.

Sincerely,

Volodymyr Zelenskyy

Mr. Rob Koehler
Director General of Global Athlete
New Jersey