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**To the President of the ICF Tomas Koniecko
the committee of directors, members of the ICF executive committee**

The Canoe Federation of Ukraine expresses its sincere gratitude for the assistance provided to Ukrainian paddlers during the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine.

At the same time, the entire canoeing family of Ukraine is concerned about the decision of the International Olympic Committee Executive Committee and the statement of Thomas Bach on January 25 about the probable return of Russian and Belarusian athletes to international competitions at a time when the war of the Russian Federation continues, aimed at the destruction of the Ukrainian people and Ukrainian statehood, as well as a cynical display neglect of all international rights, institutions and charters.

But it seems that the people who make such decisions have forgotten the values of Olympism and the humanistic ideals laid down in the Olympic Charter by Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic movement, where the first motto was "sport and peace". Is the promotion of violence, torture, rapes, shootings and murders, which Russian sports gladly supports (confirmation of which is public statements about support for the war by Russian sportsmen and officials in the sports field) - these are the new ideals of the modern Olympic movement?!

We would like to bring to your attention that the vast majority of athletes from Russia and Belarus who compete at the international level are military personnel of their country.

For Russia and Belarus, sport does not exist outside of politics - it is its continuation. These terrorist countries are inclined in any way to create a false impression of the true purpose of their policy, using athletes as an ideological weapon to implement their xenophobic propaganda, to strengthen the fighting spirit of the Russian army and the zombified Russian people, and to influence the decisions of other states regarding the support of Ukraine in the struggle for Freedom, Independence, the European choice, and world values.

There can be no question of neutrality as long as the enemy continues the war, the purpose of which is the genocide of the Ukrainian people. Any neutral flag and uniform is soaked in the blood of dead Ukrainians from Kharkiv and Chernihiv...

Irpen and Buchi... Mariupol and Kherson... Bakhmut and Soledar...

The latest events in international sports circles, the statements of the International Olympic Committee and the Olympic Council of Asia are an insult to the memory of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian citizens who died during the full-scale invasion.

Today, Ukrainian athletes with weapons in their hands protect their relatives and the Motherland from the military attack of terrorist countries. More than 220 Ukrainian athletes have already died from bullets and shells, more than 344 sports facilities have been destroyed

(these are only official statistics). Russian shelling and missile strikes, in particular from the territory of Belarus, take the lives of Ukrainians every day, who could have become world-famous athletes and coaches and simply honest, sincere and hardworking citizens of their country.

Now we see how, step by step, Russian and Belarusian propaganda is trying to seep outside, into international competitions. The very appearance of Russian and Belarusian athletes at the highest-level sports competitions is a signal to the international community that demonstrates the world's gradual acceptance of Russian aggression against Ukraine.

We cannot allow this! That is why we categorically oppose such initiatives and call on you to continue your firm position, which was adopted in March 2022 at the very beginning of the full-scale invasion, regarding sanctions and the exclusion of athletes from Russia and Belarus from participating in international competitions until the end of the war, until Russian troops will not leave the territory of Ukraine within the borders of 1991 until reparations are paid - there can be no return of Russian and Belarusian athletes to the civilized world.

We are not supporters of a boycott of the participation of Ukrainian athletes in international competitions, because to take the path of a boycott is to show weakness and give the international sports platform to murderers, terrorists and rapists.

Unfortunately, if Russian and Belarusian athletes are allowed to participate in international competitions, we will be forced to appeal and call on the entire civilized sports world to support a general boycott of such competitions, thereby expressing our commitment to the value of Olympism and the humanistic ideals enshrined in the Olympic Charter.

With the start of a full-scale war against Ukraine, the doors of world sports closed in the face of Russia and Belarus. And they should continue to be closed. After all, sport is an age-old heritage of the civilized world, not murderers, terrorists and rapists.

It will soon be a year since Ukraine has been putting up a worthy resistance to the Russian army, defending its sovereignty, territorial integrity, the European choice and becoming a shield for the entire civilized world from Russia's terrorist regime.

We are sure that thanks to joint efforts, the victory of Ukraine is not far off. Of course, such stability of Ukraine could not be without the political, military, financial and humanitarian support of the entire civilized world. And we are also sure that support in the sports field will not be an exception!

Thank you for your solidarity and support!

Glory to Ukraine !

Glory to heroes !

President
of Ukrainian Canoe Federation

Igor Slivinskyi

