

Mr. Thomas Bach, President of the IOC
Vice Presidents of the IOC
Members of the IOC Executive Committee

December 7, 2017

Dear Mr. President!

Dear Vice Presidents and members of the Executive Committee!

I am writing this letter not only as the President of the International Fencing Federation but primarily as a citizen of Russia, and someone for whom serving Olympic ideals has become one of the most important purposes of life.

The whole world of sport and the entire Olympic family were waiting for the decision of the IOC. All have been eagerly anticipating fairness, justice and clarity. The decision answered all the questions but one - whether the Olympic Themis is fair.

Even though discrimination in any shape or form contradicts the principles of the Olympic Movement, the IOC's decision certainly does put clean Russian athletes on an uneven playing field with athletes from other countries. Having gone through the purgatory of the Olympic qualifications clean Russian athletes will (a) have to wait for months for the final decisions by the special commission of IOC, (b) be deprived of the customary support of the NOC of Russia , and (c) most importantly be denied the right to see their national flag and hear their national anthem.

One of the principles of Roman law states: “Nullum crimen, nulla poena sine culpa”. (“No guilt – no punishment”). The innocent shall not be punished and put down to knees. This approach violates the basic human rights and undermines the trust in law and justice. Athletes dedicate their rather short life in sport for this one moment when they can see their country’s flag in the sky and hear the sound of their national anthem. This is the pinnacle of their glory, their personal conquest of Everest.

I ask the members of the IOC Executive Committee to balance on the scales of Themis the necessity to punish the guilty with the aspirations of clean Russian athletes and their equal rights as members of the Olympic family.

Let us give the right at least to the winners of the 2018 Olympics to reach the summit of their dream and see the flag of their motherland in Pyeongchang’s sky.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Usmanov', written in a cursive style.

Alisher Usmanov