

Heads Of Russian Anti-Doping Agency Step Down

All the top managers of the Russian Anti-Doping Agency (RUSADA) have stepped down in the latest step to clean up Russian athletics to avoid missing Rio 2016 Olympics.

Last month, Russia was suspended from international athletics after a special commission of the World Anti-Doping Agency exposed widespread state-sponsored cheating and corruption. The IAAF Council voted 22-1 on November 13 to suspend RUSADA based on a report by WADA into doping abuse allegations. The suspension prevents Russian athletes from taking part in the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and from participating in the 2016 IAAF World Indoor Championships in March to be held in Portland, USA. Moscow is now working hard to get the ban lifted in time for its athletes to compete at the Rio Games next August.

Natalia Zhelanova, an adviser to the sports minister, remarked it was decided at a meeting attended by the heads of RUSADA that the general director, Ramil Khabriev, should be relieved of his position. Natalia also remarked "*all the high-level management*" of the agency was stepping down. The Russian Anti-Doping Agency has named Anna Antseliovich, head of the Result Management and Investigation Department of RUSADA, as the acting general director of the organization.

Meanwhile, Russia's President Vladimir Putin has pledged that the country would cooperate with international officials for eradicating the "poison" of [doping](#). However, Putin remarked it was wrong on part of the IAAF to suspend athletes who have not been accused of cheating. The Russian President said the blanket suspension (of the country's entire track and field team by the world governing body of athletics) was unfair because it penalized clean athletes for the cheating of others.

In his annual news conference, Putin said if someone is doping, they should definitely be punished in the proper way because it destroys the idea of fair competition. Putin also remarked those who are guilty — the coach, the organizer, the athlete — they should be held responsible and added that those who have nothing to do with it should not answer for those who are violating something as it is not fair and not right. The Russian President promised to ensure that officials of Russian athletics would work with international bodies

such as the World Anti-Doping Agency and the [International Association of Athletics Federations](#) to fight doping. Putin said Moscow must and will be open for a joint fight on doping and said he ordered officials on all levels to cooperate openly with international bodies, not cover up anything.

Moscow has been working to implement reforms in drug testing and [anti-doping protocols](#) to satisfy requirements of the World Anti-Doping Agency ahead of the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. The UK Anti-Doping Agency (UKAD) is expected to the Russian Anti-Doping Agency in conducting athlete testing. Russian Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko had previously remarked that the core issue in the doping scandal had been the part played by certain anti-doping officers in RUSADA. Mutko remarked the main issue is to create a new team of doping officers and added we need to treat people with care.