

Russia Upset After Wrestling Chief Refused U.S. Visa

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President of Russia's Wrestling Federation (WFR) Mikhail Mamiashvili

Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs is unhappy after the president of Russia's Wrestling Federation (WFR) Mikhail Mamiashvili was refused a visa to enter the United States.

The 51-year-old had planned to watch the world championships in Greco-Roman and freestyle wrestling which are taking place in Las Vegas from Sept. 7-12. They are the main qualifying tournaments for the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

"We were forced to take note that Washington's line of trying to cause problems for our country in the international arena has now even effecting the sporting sphere," the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement on its [website](#) Tuesday.

"We have serious concerns about the refusal to let the Olympic champion and the president of the Wrestling Federation of Russia Mikhail Mamiashvili into the United States."

"We would like the American powers that be to remember that sport is separate from politics. We would like to wish our wrestlers the best of luck in the championships and there will be no repeat of the unfair practices that have unfortunately been carried out by the U.S. administration on the wrestling mat," the statement concluded.

Mamiashvili, a former Olympic champion, is also vice-president of United World Wrestling (UWW) and the head of the organization's judging committee.

"I think that after what has happened the UWW will decide that the United States should never again hold another major international tournament," Mamiashvili told the TASS news agency.

"I am in contact with our delegation every 60-90 minutes, even despite the time difference. I think that this situation has brought our team even closer together and inspired them even more," he added.

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