

Russian Olympic Athlete's Facebook Post Attacked by Trolls

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Darya Klishina (Matt Dunham / AP)

Russian trolls attacked a Facebook [post](#) by Olympic athlete Daria Klishina on Monday, calling her “treasonous” and unpatriotic.

Klishina, a long jumper, had written on the social media site to thank the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) for allowing her to participate in the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. She is one of two Russian track and field athletes to be deemed eligible so far.

Many Russian trolls have attacked Klishina, saying that she had betrayed her team, and therefore acted the “American” way: for the individual rather than for the collective. Others criticized her current residence in the United States, calling on her to renounce her Russian citizenship and get a U.S. passport instead.

One such user wrote, “Why don’t you just go compete under the American flag in the Olympics, traitor?” Another called Klishina a “cheapo,” saying that “this will forever remain a permanent stain on your conscience — although, I got a little carried away there, because you never even had one.”

Many of the trolls vowed to root against her, and wished a swift end to her sports career. She was called a “traitor” to the motherland, with some accusing her of soiling the flag and her ancestors’ legacy — saying she had no “solidarity” with her country and fellow athletes.

However, many wrote in her defense, with one user calling the trolls “non-patriots” and “corruptioneers” who “love doping, corruption, and Putinism” but not the Russia they claim to defend. Others wished her congratulations and good luck, telling her not to pay attention to such people. They criticized the trolls’ claims of unpatriotism, calling them baseless.

Klishina, 25, was cleared to compete as a neutral athlete on Sunday by the IAAF. She and Yulia Stepanova, both of whom live in the United States, are the only Russian track and field athletes to be cleared so far out of the 136 who applied for “exceptional eligibility.”

The International Olympic Committee must still approve the Russian athletes for competition.

Yevgeny Trofimov, Olympic gold medalist Yelena Isinbayeva’s coach, also criticized Klishina for her Facebook post. He said her expression of gratitude to “the system that bullies and humiliates Russia — her home country” was “unpleasant.” He added that she shouldn’t have “groveled and thanked those who are doing everything in their power to keep Russia’s team from entering the Olympic games.”

In May, pole vaulter Isinbayeva accused the IAAF and anti-doping chiefs of violating her human rights for not allowing her to compete. She applied to the IAAF for exceptional eligibility, but her application was declined on Sunday.

The IAAF suspended Russia’s track and field athletes in November, after the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) accused the government of sponsoring and concealing a doping program for its athletes. The All-Russian Athletics Federation (ARAF) has appealed the ban, and the Court of Arbitration for Sport is set to rule on their appeal by July 21.

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