

SSI PRESS RELEASE

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Safe Sport International demands stringent criteria for the protection of athletes from perpetrators of abuse following failures at the Paris Olympic Games.

The Paris Olympics saw multiple examples of individuals with histories of abuse-related convictions or safeguarding investigations afforded the privilege of participating in those Games. These unacceptable conditions do not ensure environments where athletes can participate in sport without fear of inter-personal violence, abuse or harassment. The impact a perpetrator's presence has on survivors of abuse must be acknowledged for the harm it causes to those both inside and outside of sport, for life. Abuse must not be normalised, or the impact minimised in society. With the Paris Paralympics only 7 days away, SSI believes this situation must change.

"We stand with all affected persons betrayed by a sport system that allows individuals convicted of abuse or harassment to participate at the highest levels" said Anne Tiivas, Chair of SSI, "those who commit such acts should not have a place at major sporting events".

SSI firmly believes that certain offences should automatically disqualify individuals from participating in major sporting events. SSI view representation and accreditation at major sporting events as a privilege that should not be automatically extended to those who have committed violent crimes, sexual offences (especially those involving minors), or human rights violations.

"Major sporting events should be about celebrating the best in people and sport" said Professor Emerita Sandra Kirby OC OLY, founding member of SSI, "organisers must set a positive example for society in the standards they uphold at their events".

Safe Sport International is calling on national governments and sporting event organisers such as the IOC, IPC, FIFA, to set stringent criteria for the exclusion of those whose offences should prevent them from participating in sporting events. Demonstrating moral courage in implementing safeguards is a crucial responsibility of institutions to ensure the safety of people and integrity of sport at all levels.

To learn more about the Safe Sport International and our vision of everyone, everywhere safe in sport visit www.safesportinternational.com.

About Safe Sport International:

Safe Sport International (SSI) is a leading non-profit and UK based charity committed to ending all forms of inter-personal violence, abuse and harassment in sports environments globally. SSI works to develop standards, guidance, and best practices for safeguarding in sport worldwide.

In response to a number of high-profile cases at the Paris Olympics 2024 highlighting a critical gap in current guidance for sports bodies, on the 26th July 2024 SSI released a discussion paper titled [*"Safeguarding in sport: Towards an international framework for representation following criminal, civil or disciplinary records related to the abuse of others"*](#).

SSI will continue to work towards establishing an international framework and guidance in this area.

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