



Svaz vodáků České republiky z.s.



Prague, 8.3.2022

Dear IRF, dear organizers of the 2022 R4 World Championship,

It is with great anticipation that we have read the IRF BOD's position on the situation in Ukraine, published on March 7th, 2022. The following lines are really not easy to write, but we fundamentally disagree with the stated solution.

Our initial position is that there is a cruel, unprovoked war going on in Ukraine. Russia, with the support of Belarus, has invaded Ukraine without an official declaration of war, is occupying its territory, killing civilians, women and children are dying. We can all watch the uncensored news daily online on independent television and on the Internet, and we have no doubt about the above.

We are aware that no attitudes, no positions, no restrictions can completely prevent injustices. We fundamentally reject the principles of collective guilt. We believe that Russian athletes as individuals do not agree with war. However, it is completely inconceivable to us that we would meet at a competition any representative of a state that commits war crimes, attacks defenceless civilians and violates international law, and then uses its sporting successes for its propaganda.

In our first open letter to the IRF management, we clearly stated our position, which we still maintain. We demand that until further notice all athletes, officials and referees of the Russian and Belarusian Rafting Federations be banned from participating in IRF international competitions. The IOC has recommended the same procedure to all sports federations and many international sports federations have accepted it.

Today, the Board of the SVoČR unanimously decided that the Czech Republic will not send any rafting team to the 2022 R4 World Championships in Bosnia and Herzegovina, nor to any other international competitions if they are held with the participation of Russian or Belarusian athletes, whether under its own flag or any other neutral flag.

We are aware that politics does not belong in sport. But today we are not doing politics, today we are trying to stop a war!

Sincerely,



Libor Polák

president of SVoČR (Union of Boaters of the Czech Republic)