

Afghanistan's Paralympics team won't compete in Tokyo.



By Motoko Rich

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Two Afghan athletes who were scheduled to compete at the Paralympics in Tokyo will not attend the Games, organizers said.

Hossain Rasouli, 26, was scheduled to run in a men's 100-meter event, and Zakia Khudadadi, 22, had qualified to compete in taekwondo, a sport that is making its Paralympic debut. They were scheduled to travel with at least one official, according to the International Paralympic Committee.

The committee said in a statement that the chaos of the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan, which caused most commercial flights to be suspended, would prevent the athletes from traveling to the Games.

"Due to the serious ongoing situation in the country, all airports are closed and there is no way for them to travel to Tokyo," the I.P.C. said. "We hope the team and officials remain safe and well during this difficult time."

The Tokyo organizing committee echoed those sentiments.

"These athletes have overcome strict conditions for qualification and preparation for the Games, and it is truly regrettable that they will not be able to compete," the committee said in a statement, adding that it hoped the athletes and Paralympics personnel in Afghanistan were safe.

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