

[Skip to main content](#)The Guardian logo, featuring the word "theguardian" in a blue, lowercase, sans-serif font.

Tokyo 2020 Olympics committee rejects plagiarism claims over logo

• Belgian claims design is similar to one used in the Théâtre de Liège • Tokyo organising committee insist logo underwent thorough checks

Reuters

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Tokyo [Olympics](#) organisers have said there is no problem with their new logo after questions were raised about possible plagiarism, with some commentators suggesting that it bore a resemblance to another design.

The emblem, unveiled last week, had already received mixed reviews from the Japanese public and risks becoming the latest in a series of missteps to dent Japan's reputation as it prepares to host the summer Games in 2020.

Designed by Kenjiro Sano, the logo – which includes black for diversity and a red circle that echoes the Japanese flag – centres around a loose representation of the letter T.

However, questions about the motif erupted on social media after the Belgian-based designer [Olivier Debie uploaded the logo for the Théâtre de Liège](#) in Belgium, with many demanding clarification about what they said was too much similarity. NHK national television said the emblem also resembled the logo drawn up by a Spanish designer to help raise money for Japan after the earthquake and tsunami in March 2011.

The Tokyo 2020 organising committee, however, insisted that the design underwent thorough checks before being unveiled. “Prior to the selection of this design, the Tokyo 2020 organising committee conducted long, extensive and international verifications through a transparent process,” they said in a statement.

The logo, which replaced a ring of Japanese cherry blossoms in rainbow colours used as a bid emblem, was unveiled earlier this month in a ceremony embellished by strobe lights and billowing smoke in a Tokyo plaza as hundreds watched.

The International Olympic Committee director of communications Mark Adams told NHK that similar problems had arisen before, most recently with the logo for the 2016 Rio Games.

Japan won the bid to host the Games in 2013 largely on its reputation for organisational prowess but has been hit by a series of logistical problems ever since, including the scrapping of the design for the centrepiece [Olympic stadium earlier this month](#) due to soaring costs.

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