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ASIA PACIFIC

# 2020 Olympics Logo Is Discarded After Plagiarism Accusations

By **HISAKO UENO** and **MAKIKO INOUE** SEPT. 1, 2015

TOKYO — Organizers of the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo said on Tuesday that they were abandoning a logo recently chosen for the Games, bowing to a public outcry following accusations that it had been plagiarized.

Toshiro Muto, director general of the Tokyo Organizing Committee, did not say that the logo's creator, Kenjiro Sano, had stolen the design, which Mr. Sano has denied. But he acknowledged what he called the "concerns" of the public.

"We, the organizing committee members, are not experts and are not in the position to judge a logo design," Mr. Muto said at a news conference on Tuesday. "But the concerns among ordinary people are shared by us. We would like to select emblems that symbolize the Tokyo Games, loved and supported by many people."

He said that Mr. Sano had agreed to withdraw his design, and that a competition would be held to choose a new logo. In a statement issued late Tuesday, Mr. Sano again denied that he had copied or plagiarized the work of others to make the design.

The logo, which has been used in commercials and other promotional materials, was introduced on July 24. Last month, a Belgian graphic designer, Olivier Debie, sued the International Olympic Committee to prevent the logo's use, saying that it closely resembled one he had created for a theater in Liège, Belgium, in 2011.

The organizers of the Tokyo Games defended Mr. Sano. But further accusations emerged. An earlier version of Mr. Sano's logo was said to have resembled a poster from a 2013 exhibition in Tokyo; Mr. Sano acknowledged attending that event, but he said he did not remember the poster, according to Mr. Muto.

This week, Mr. Sano was accused of taking images from the Internet without permission to create backgrounds for the logo in some presentations. At the news conference, Mr. Muto said Mr. Sano had admitted doing that, but said he had meant for those images to be seen only by the selection committee. In his statement on Tuesday, Mr. Sano apologized to the other artists involved.

Mr. Muto and other high-ranking Olympic officials met on Tuesday afternoon to discuss the matter. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said the committee had made an "appropriate decision."

Mr. Muto quoted Mr. Sano as saying that he and his family had become "targets of abuse, day and night."

It was the second high-profile embarrassment in recent months for the 2020 Summer Games. In July, the Japanese government scuttled plans for the Games' centerpiece venue, a vast stadium designed by the architect Zaha Hadid, amid anger over cost estimates that had spiraled beyond \$2 billion.

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