Animal rights activists pressure Olympics' organisers over LVMH sponsorship

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Animal rights campaigners have urged organisers of the 2024 Olympics to make any sponsorship deal with LVMH conditional on the luxury giant agreeing to stop using fur and animal skins.
The UK-based People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) told the International Olympic Committee (IOC) that the practice was a "known pandemic risk" as well as deeply cruel.

LVMH, which owns the Louis Vuitton and Fendi brands, is expected to be the last major sponsor named for the 2024 games in Paris, according to organiser sources.

However, it has not followed a host of high-end fashion rivals, including Versace, Chanel, Michael Kors and Saint Laurent, and stopped using fur in its collections.

"LVMH has so far failed to act responsibly and continues to risk the public's health with its mink coats and python bags," PETA's vice president Mimi Bekhechi said in the letter sent Tuesday to IOC President Thomas Bach.

"We all know the terrible toll Covid-19 took on lives around the globe, so it would be unconscionable for the next Olympic Games to be sponsored by a company that supports these dangerous industries."

The 2020 Games in Tokyo was heavily impacted by coronavirus, with the pandemic forcing its delay by a year and hitting its popularity with people in the host country.

There was no immediate comment from LVMH when contacted by AFP.

The world's largest luxury group told AFP last September that it continued to allow its brands to meet customer demand for fur products.

These were being made "in the most ethical and responsible way possible", the firm said, adding that it had banned all fur from endangered species.

According to PETA, 85 percent of fur sold in the world originates from animals who live their entire lives in captivity, often in conditions "of misery" and "extreme suffering".

They are usually killed by poison gas, electrocution or beaten to death with clubs, it said.

The international fur trade is estimated to be worth several tens of billions of dollars annually, employing around one million people worldwide.