



International
Olympic
Committee

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IOC REFUGEE OLYMPIC TEAM – PARIS 2024
REPRESENTING +100M DISPLACED PEOPLE
AROUND THE WORLD



REFUGEE
OLYMPIC TEAM





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1. The Refugee Olympic Team – a message of hope

At the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in October 2015, confronted with the global refugee crisis that has seen millions of people in the world displaced, IOC President Thomas Bach announced the creation of the Refugee Olympic Team – the first of its kind – to take part in the Olympic Games Rio 2016.

Working with the National Olympic Committees (NOCs), the IOC identified refugee athletes around the world, and through Olympic Solidarity provided them with the necessary support and funding to assist them in their qualification efforts.

Ten months on from the announcement, 10 athletes, who originally hailed from Ethiopia, South Sudan, Syria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, were competing alongside 11,000 fellow athletes in Rio, sending a message of hope and inclusion to millions of refugees, and inspiring the world with the strength of their human spirit.

Following this historical participation, refugee athlete scholarships were established. They are fully funded by the IOC through its Olympic Solidarity programme dedicated to refugee athletes. Through this programme, Olympic Solidarity helps refugee athletes not only to train with the aim of qualifying for the Olympic Games, but also to continue their sporting career and build their future.

The scholarships and the Refugee Olympic Team are managed by the Olympic Refugee Foundation (ORF). The ORF was established by the IOC to ensure that young people affected by displacement thrive through sport. Through its work, the Foundation has ensured that almost 400,000 young people affected by displacement are able to access sport, and reap the benefits of doing so.

In October 2018, the IOC Session decided that there would be a Refugee Olympic Team for Tokyo 2020, and as a result of Recommendation 11 of Olympic Agenda 2020+5, the strategic roadmap of the IOC and the Olympic Movement approved in March 2021, the IOC decided that there would be a Refugee Olympic Team for the Olympic Games Paris 2024 and for the Youth Olympic Games in Dakar in 2026.

Twenty-nine athletes competed as part of the Refugee Olympic Team at Tokyo 2020 and 36 athletes will be competing in Paris.

This unique project demonstrates the IOC's commitment to standing with refugees and supporting them through sport. The Refugee Olympic Team is part of a comprehensive approach which is aimed at increasing access to sport for young people affected by displacement, and which builds on over 25 years of partnership between the IOC and UNHCR.

“This will be a symbol of hope for all refugees in the world, and will make the world better aware of the magnitude of this crisis. It is also a signal to the international community that refugees are our fellow human beings and are an enrichment to society.” **IOC President Thomas Bach – 2016**



1.1 The Refugee Olympic Team - Rio 2016

In order to form the Refugee Olympic Team for Rio 2016, NOCs around the world were asked by the IOC to identify refugee athletes with the potential to qualify for the Olympic Games. Such candidates could then receive funding from Olympic Solidarity to assist with their preparations and qualification efforts.

Forty-three promising candidates were initially identified, and 10 refugee athletes competing in athletics, judo and swimming were ultimately selected to make up the first-ever Refugee Olympic Team.

Acting as a symbol of hope for refugees worldwide and bringing global attention to the refugee crisis, the athletes took part in the Olympic Games Rio 2016, marching and competing under the Olympic flag.

The Rio 2016 Refugee Olympic Team was composed of:

- Anjelina Nadai Lohalith, athletics (1500m)
- James Nyak Chiengjiek, athletics (400m)
- Paulo Amotun Lokoro, athletics (1500m)
- Popole Misenga, judo (-90kg)
- Rami Anis, swimming (100m butterfly)
- Rose Nathike Lokonyen, athletics (800m)
- Yiech Pur Biel, athletics (800M)
- Yolande Bukasa Mabika, judo (-70kg)
- Yonas Kinde, athletics (marathon)
- Yusra Mardini, swimming (100m butterfly and freestyle)

The members of team, who came from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Syria, were based and training in Belgium, Brazil, Germany, Kenya and Luxembourg.

Olympian and former marathon world record-holder Tegla Loroupe (Kenya) was the team's Chef de Mission, while Isabela Mazão (Brazil) from UNHCR Brazil, acted as the Deputy Chef de Mission.

After Rio 2016, the IOC and UNHCR continued to support the 10 athletes to help them continue to train, but also to build their future. Six of them competed in Tokyo.

1.2 The Refugee Olympic Team - Tokyo 2020

The Tokyo 2020 Refugee Olympic Team was composed of **29 athletes** who competed in 12 sports:

- Abdullah Sediqi, taekwondo (-68kg)
- Ahmad Badreddin Wais, cycling (time trial)
- Aker Al Obaidi, wrestling (Greco-Roman -67kg)
- Alaa Maso, swimming (freestyle 50m)



- Anjelina Nadai Lohalith, athletics (1500m)
- Aram Mahmoud, badminton (singles)
- Cyrille Fagat Tchatchet II, weightlifting (-96kg)
- Dina Pouryounes Langeroudi, taekwondo (-49kg)
- Dorian Kalatela, athletics (100m)
- Eldric Sella Rodriguez, boxing (-75kg)
- Hamoon Derafshipoour, karate (-67kg)
- Jamal Abdelmaji Eisa, athletics (5000m)
- James Nyak Chiengjiek OLY, athletics (400m)
- Kimia Alizadeh OLY, taekwondo (-57kg)
- Luna Solomon, shooting (air rifle 10m)
- Masomah Ali Zada, cycling (time trial)
- Paulo Amotun Lokoro OLY, athletics (1500m)
- Popole Misenga OLY, judo (-90kg and mixed team)
- Rose Likonyen Nathike OLY, athletics (800m)
- Saeid Fazoula, canoeing (500m)
- Sanda Aldass, judo (-57kg)
- Tachlowini Gabriyesos, athletics (marathon)
- Wael Shueb, karate (kata)
- Wessam Salamana OLY, boxing (-57kg)
- Yusra Mardini, OLY swimming (100m butterfly and freestyle)

Four additional team members from the International Judo Federation Refugee project also took part in the first-ever Olympic Judo Mixed Team event. The athletes who competed alongside Sanda Aldass and Popole Misenga were:

- Ahmad Alikaj, judo (mixed team)
- Javad Majoub, judo (mixed team)
- Muna Dahouk, judo (mixed team)
- Nigara Shaenn, judo (mixed team)

The Refugee Olympic Team members came from **11 countries** – Afghanistan, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Congo and Venezuela – and were training and living in the territories of 13 host NOCs – Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Israel, Kenya, Portugal, the Netherlands, Trinidad and Tobago, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

In Tokyo, they competed in **12 sports**: athletics, badminton, boxing, canoeing, cycling, judo, karate, taekwondo, shooting, swimming, weightlifting and wrestling.

The 29 athletes were selected from among 56 Refugee Athlete Scholarship-holders supported in the build-up to the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020.

The 56 Scholarship-holders came from 21 host countries – Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Croatia, Egypt, France, Germany, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Luxembourg, Portugal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Türkiye, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States – and represented 12 sports: athletics, badminton, boxing, canoeing, cycling, judo, karate, taekwondo, shooting, swimming, weightlifting, and wrestling.



The list of the 56 Refugee Athlete Scholarship-holders included nine athletes who were part of the first-ever Refugee Olympic Team that competed at Rio 2016.

1.3 The Refugee Olympic Team - Paris 2024

The Refugee Olympic Team for Paris 2024 will continue to send a message of hope to the more than 114 million forcibly displaced people in the world.

The composition of the Refugee Olympic Team for Paris 2024 has been based on a number of criteria, including first and foremost, each athlete's sporting performance and their refugee status as confirmed by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. Beyond that, the team represents the global population of displaced people and, as such, consideration has been given to a balanced representation of sport and gender, as well as the geographical spread of countries of origin.

The Refugee Olympic Team for Paris 2024 is composed of **36 athletes**:

- Farida Abaroge, athletics (1500m)
- Omid Ahmadsafa, boxing (-51kg)
- Yahya Al Ghotany, taekwondo (-68kg)
- Mohammad Amin Alsalami, athletics (long jump)
- Amir Ansari, cycling (time trial)
- Sibghatullah Arab, judo (mixed team & -81kg)
- Matin Balsini, swimming (200m butterfly)
- Mahboubeh Barbari Zharfi, judo (mixed team & +78kg)
- Edilio Francisco Centeno Nieves, shooting (10m air pistol)
- Muna Dahouk, judo (mixed team & -57kg)
- Jamal Abdelmaji Eisa Mohammed, athletics (10,000m)
- Saeid Fazloulou, canoe (K-1 1,000m)
- Tachlowini Gabriyesos, athletics (marathon)
- Eyeru Gebru, cycling (road race)
- Yekta Jamali Galeh, weightlifting (-81kg)
- Fernando Dayan Jorge Enriquez, canoe (C-1 1,000m)
- Dorian Keletela, athletics (100m)
- Adnan Khankan, judo (mixed team & -100kg)
- Perina Lokure, athletics (800m)
- Iman Mahdavi, wrestling (freestyle -74kg)
- Farzad Mansouri, taekwondo (-80kg)
- Alaa Maso, swimming (50m freestyle)
- Kasra Mehdipournejad, taekwondo (+80kg)
- Cindy Ngamba, boxing (-75kg)
- Dina Pouryounes Langeroudi, taekwondo (-49kg)
- Mohammad Rashnonezhad, judo (mixed team & -60kg)
- Amir Rezanejad, canoe (canoe slalom)
- Ramiro Mora Romero, weightlifting (-102kg)
- Nigara Shaheen, judo (mixed team & -63kg)
- Luna Solomon, shooting (10m air rifle)
- Saman Soltani, canoe (K-1 500m)
- Musa Suliman, athletics (800m)
- Manizha Talash, breaking (Bgirl)
- Hadi Tiranvalipour, taekwondo (-58kg)
- Jamal Valizadeh, wrestling (Greco-Roman -60kg)
- Dorsa Yavarivafa, badminton (single)



The Refugee Olympic Team members come from **11 countries** – Afghanistan, Cameroon, Congo, Cuba, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iran, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela – and are hosted by **15 NOCs** – Austria, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Mexico, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and USA.

In Paris, they will compete in **12 sports**: athletics, badminton, boxing, breaking, canoeing, cycling, judo, shooting, swimming, taekwondo, weightlifting and wrestling.

The 36 athletes were predominantly selected from among 73 Refugee Scholarship-holders who came from 12 countries, lived in 24 host countries, and represented 14 sports.

Tokyo 2020 Refugee Olympic Team cyclist and member of the IOC Athletes' Commission, Masomah Ali Zada will be the team's Chef de Mission, while Bernadette Raymonde Castel Stephen from UNHCR will act as the Deputy Chef de Mission.

- The Refugee Olympic Team official acronym is EOR, based on the French name: *Equipe Olympique des Réfugiés*.
- During the Opening Ceremony, the team will appear with the Olympic flag in second position, immediately after Greece.
- For all official representations of the team (including any medal ceremonies), the Olympic flag will be raised and the Olympic Anthem will be played.
- Like the teams from all the other 206 NOCs taking part in the Olympic Games, the team will stay at the Olympic Village.

1.4 A team powered by solidarity

The success of the Refugee Olympic Team for Rio 2016 led to the creation of a dedicated Olympic Solidarity programme for refugee athletes.

Through Olympic Solidarity, the IOC aims to organise assistance for all the NOCs, particularly those with the greatest needs. Overall, some 1,600 athletes from 185 NOCs are currently benefitting from Olympic Scholarships.

Olympic Scholarships for Refugee Athletes is one of the multi-faceted programmes prioritising athlete development.

It offers NOCs the opportunity to identify athletes living in their countries and support them throughout their training, preparation and participation in high-level competitions. Twenty host NOCs are currently assisting Olympic Solidarity in this project.

To benefit from the programme, candidates must fulfil a number of conditions:

1. hold refugee status confirmed by UNHCR; and
2. demonstrate their potential at national or international level so that their NOCs can select them and send their candidatures to Olympic Solidarity. The NOCs have an important job to do at national level in terms of selecting the best candidates. The candidatures are then analysed by Olympic Solidarity in close cooperation with the IFs. The final allocation decision lies with Olympic Solidarity, which then informs the NOCs concerned.



Ahead of the Olympic Games Paris 2024, currently 73 refugee athletes are benefiting from the scholarships provided by the IOC.

2. The Olympic Refugee Foundation

Further to the success of the Refugee Olympic Team, the IOC launched the Olympic Refugee Foundation in September 2017 as the next chapter in its long-term commitment to supporting the protection, development and empowerment of displaced young people through sport 365 days a year across the globe.

By the end of 2023, almost 400,000 young people affected by displacement had access to safe sport as a result of the Olympic Refugee Foundation's work. Following an investment of more than USD 23 million, the Foundation ran 16 programmes in 11 different countries. By reaching thousands of individuals, the Foundation has empowered them to rebuild their lives, improve their mental health, develop new skills and regain a sense of purpose and belonging through sport.

Key achievements of the Olympic Refugee Foundation by the end of 2023 included:

- Directly reaching more than 130,000 young people affected by displacement through its programmes, and launching three new programmes in Burkina Faso, Uganda and Jordan;
- The Uganda programme – Game Connect – showing considerably improved levels of psychosocial well-being amongst its participants;
- Responding to the mental health needs of Ukrainian refugees through work seeded in the Olympic Refugee Foundation Think Tank; and
- Supporting more than 70 athletes through the Refugee Athlete Support programme.

The Foundation also worked with the co-convenors of the Sport for Refugees Coalition – UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and the Scort Foundation – to mobilise more than 140 entities in support of the Multi-stakeholder Pledge on Sport, which formed a central part of the Global Refugee Forum in December 2023 and committed almost USD 50 million to reaching more than 800,000 people affected by displacement by 2027.

Key programmes:

- ***Terrains d'Avenir in France:*** This three-year programme, delivered in partnership with a consortium of local organisations (Emmaus, Play International, Kabubu, Ovale Citoyen and Futbolmas) is co-financed by the ORF and the French Ministry of Sport and the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, and supported by the Ville de Paris, Paris 2024 and the French National Olympic Committee (CNOSF). With 30 sessions a week featuring swimming, dance, yoga, football, cricket, taekwondo, boxing, sport climbing, rugby and other activities, *Terrains d'Avenir* has, since its launch, involved over 5,000 young people and trained more than 120 coaches. To overcome the barriers to accessing sport that exist in Paris, the *Terrains d'Avenir* licence has been created specifically to enable young asylum seekers and refugees to access these sessions.



- **Game Connect in Uganda:** With Uganda hosting the largest number of refugees in Africa (1.5 million), the Game Connect programme has supported more than 12,000 young people affected by conflict, displacement and trauma to improve their mental health and well-being. Impact assessments have demonstrated that the programme has significantly improved psychosocial well-being, anxiety and depression among young people. Based on this success, the ORF Board recently decided to extend the programme for a new phase until 2026. Game Connect is delivered in partnership with a number of organisations, including the Uganda Olympic Committee, AVSI, Right to Play, Youth Sport Uganda and UNHCR Uganda.
- **Spirit in Bangladesh:** This is the first ORF programme that responds to climate-related displacement. Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries affected by climate change, with devastating consequences on the availability of water, food and infrastructure. Delivered with a consortium of partners (Terre des hommes, Solidarity and Breaking the Silence), the programme is located in the Dhaka slums and in Kurigram in the north-west of Bangladesh, where 16 rivers cause regular flooding and place additional pressures on livelihoods. Through sports such as football, handball and traditional games, Spirit supports young people to shape a brighter future for themselves.
- **Sport Coach+ in Ukraine:** This is an innovative project which aims to equip 2,500 sports coaches in Ukraine and surrounding countries with the skills to more effectively manage young players who may have experienced trauma as a result of their forced displacement. The project is a collaboration between [the Olympic Refugee Foundation and the International Federation of the Red Cross \(IFRC\) Psychosocial Reference Centre](#). For young people experiencing the stresses – and often trauma – of displacement, it is essential that sport is delivered in ways which are safe and supportive. Sport Coach+ is intended to help maximise the positive contribution of sport to the mental health and well-being of young people as part of a holistic response in forced displacement contexts.

Some displaced young people enrolled in the Olympic Refugee Foundation programmes will choose to pursue sport further through the network of clubs and coaches, and some may be awarded an IOC refugee athlete scholarship. For the very top athletes, this could even lead to achieving the ultimate sporting goal: competing at the Olympic Games as part of the Refugee Olympic Team.

However, for most young people affected by displacement, the Foundation's work is about the benefits they can experience through sport that create a strong foundation for life, living out the Olympic values.

www.olympicrefugefoundation.org

3. Social media

[Facebook page](#) – <https://www.facebook.com/RefugeeOlympicTeam/>

[Instagram page](#) – <https://www.instagram.com/refugeeolympicteam/>

[X account](#) – <https://twitter.com/refugeesolympic>

[LinkedIn page](#) – <https://www.linkedin.com/company/olympic-refuge-foundation/>

Hashtags: #RefugeeOlympicTeam #Paris2024 #OlympicRefuge



4. Media

For all enquiries, including interview requests, please contact the IOC Press Office: pressoffice@olympic.org.

5. Photo gallery

Pictures of the Refugee Olympic Team for Rio 2016 are available here: <https://flic.kr/s/aHsmUCZCFj>

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- You are responsible for obtaining all other consents (i.e. the copyright owner and the people who appear in the photo).

For any other enquiries, please contact images@olympic.org.

6. Video News Releases

All video news releases are available here: newsroom.olympics.com

7. Contact

Press Office – pressoffice@olympic.org