



INTERNATIONAL  
OLYMPIC  
COMMITTEE

**Story script**

**The International Olympic Committee (IOC) OFFERS THE FOLLOWING VIDEO NEWS RELEASE TO ALL NEWS AGENCIES, BROADCASTERS AND ALL ONLINE PLATFORMS FREE OF CHARGE.**

**Story Headline:** Syrian refugee Rami Anis selected for Refugee Olympic Team for Olympic Games Rio 2016

**Date:** 3 June 2016

**Place:** Ghent, Belgium

### **STORY SCRIPT**

Syrian refugee Rami Anis has been selected together with nine fellow refugees to be part of the Refugee Olympic Team (ROT) at the Olympic Games Rio 2016. The composition of the team was officially announced by the IOC today.

The swimmer will now represent the ROT which will join the other teams of the 206 National Olympic Committees (NOCs) competing in Rio. The team was created by the IOC Executive Board in March as a symbol of hope for refugees worldwide.

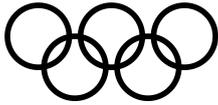
The 25 year-old is Syria's fastest swimmer in the 100m butterfly and now resides in a small town close to the Belgian city of Ghent.

Anis fled Syria in 2011 when he was 20 years old and likely to have been called up to join the army for national service.

To avoid military involvement in the civil war Anis and his family joined his brother in Turkey before resettling in Belgium four years later.

Having been selected as part of the ROT, Anis is now looking forward to following in the footsteps of his swimming idol.

He said: "I'm very excited because I will see the big swimmer Michael Phelps in there and I am very proud."



Refugee athletes had to reach specific sporting standards and have official refugee status verified by the United Nations (UN) to be in contention to be part of the ROT – the first of its kind. They will march with the Olympic flag immediately before host nation Brazil at the Opening Ceremony and will have their own welcoming ceremony in the Olympic Village.

But the 25 year-old sees sport as a uniting factor between everyone in the world, no matter what background people are from.

“When it comes to sport there is no difference between a refugee or a Syrian. When it comes to sport, you just have to compete to be at the top.”

Anis’ determination to succeed is an attitude celebrated by his coach in Belgium, Carine Verbauwen.

She said: “It’s a bit different than the other swimmers because he has another mentality – not better or worse, just different.

“He’s very stubborn, that’s good if you have a goal. So if he wants to do something he says ‘I’m going to do that’ whereas Belgians say ‘I’m going to try to do that’ and for me that’s the difference.”

The Games of the XXXI Olympiad will be held from 5 to 21 August 2016. Approximately 10,500 athletes from more than 200 countries will compete in 28 sports, comprising 98 medal events.