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Story Headline: IOC President Thomas Bach says the Olympic Games in Rio will deliver a message of hope in troubled times.


Location: Ancient Olympia, Greece.

Date: 21 April 2016

STORY SCRIPT

IOC President Thomas Bach says the Olympic Games Rio 2016 ‘will be a message of hope in troubled times’ as the Olympic Torch Relay gets underway.

The Rio 2016 flame was lit in Ancient Olympia, Greece, during a ceremony organised by the Hellenic Olympic Committee (HOC). It marks the beginning a six day torch journey around Greece covering 2,235km before the flame is officially presented to the organisers of the Olympic Games Rio 2016 on the 27 of April at the Panathenaic Stadium, the site of the first modern Olympic Games in Athens back in 1896.

IOC President Thomas Bach spoke at the ceremony of the power of the Olympic flame in promoting peace and spreading Olympic values. He said, “These Olympic Games will be a message of hope in troubled times and the flame will carry this message into all corners of Brazil and indeed, all the world.”

President Bach went on to talk of the unity and legacy of the Games in Brazil. “Despite the difficulties that Brazil is facing today, the flame is a timeless reminder that we are all part of the same humanity. The flame is
an ancient symbol of peace and harmony, a symbol of the power of humanity to come together despite our differences. This will be the legacy of the Olympic Games for Brazil and for the world.”

The Olympic flame, a symbol of peace and harmony will be carried across Greece by 450 different torchbearers including a yet to be named Syrian refugee who has recently claimed asylum in the country.

The refugee torchbearer will run through the Eleonas Open Reception Centre for refugees in Athens. The same centre visited in January of this year by IOC President Thomas Bach and Jacques Rogge, IOC Honorary President and UN Special Envoy for Youth Refugees and Sport.

The Olympic flame in a refugee camp is more than symbolic after the Executive Board of the IOC announced in March of this year the creation of the Refugee Olympic Athletes (ROA) team to compete at Rio 2016.

An IOC emergency fund of 2 million US dollars was also made available to National Olympic Committees (NOCs) for the purpose of organising programmes to help refugees worldwide in 2015.

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 of 98 medal events.

The lighting of the Rio 2016 flame in Athens was attended by the President of the Hellenic Republic Prokopis Pavlopoulos; the Mayor of Rio de Janeiro Eduardo Paes; the Chair of the IOC Coordination Commission for the Olympic Games Rio 2016 Nawal El Moutawakel, the President of the Organising Committee for the Olympic Games Rio 2016 & Paralympic Games Carlos Nuzman and the President of the HOC Spyros Capralos.

The Olympic Flame will visit Geneva and Lausanne, home of the Olympic movement, before the Brazilian leg of the Olympic Torch Relay begins on the 3 of May in the countries capital Brasilia.

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