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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: South Sudanese refugee Yiech Pur Biel selected for Refugee Olympic Team at Olympic Games Rio 2016

Date: 3 June 2016

Place: Nairobi, Kenya

STORY SCRIPT

South Sudanese refugee Yiech Pur Biel 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.

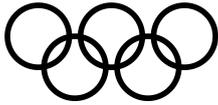
The 21 year-old will now represent the ROT - which will join the other teams of the 206 National Olympic Committees (NOCs) competing in Rio. The team was created by the IOC Executive Board in March as a symbol of hope for refugees worldwide.

Biel, who fled his home country in 2005, only recently discovered running having played football at school – something which adds to the pride of being selected as part of the ROT.

He said: “It will be an amazing time in life because it will be the first achievement in my life to go to that place. I’ve never been out of Kakuma between 2005 and 2014 but to go out to Brazil it will be a great moment in my life and a story to my children and grandchildren.”

The 800m runner still has both parents and nine siblings in South Sudan, whom he hopes to inspire with the news of his ROT selection for the Olympic Games.

“Being a refugee is only a name,” he said.



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“And to come out in that situation to be called a refugee is only a human being like me who can change that name, you see. From that journey from Kakuma to this place, I call myself an ambassador for refugees.”

The refugee athlete spent 11 years in the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya until last year when he heard that the Tegla Loroupe Foundation was organizing athletics trials in Kakuma.

Biel took part in the trials, showed promising results and was selected to join the Foundation. He has been training there ever since.

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.

Now training at the Tegla Loroupe Foundation in Nairobi, Biel said: “Our training is very good here compared to Kakuma because when we ran in Kakuma most of the people didn’t even have shoes.

“They were doing barefoot running on the tarmac road but here in Nairobi we have more facilities because I don’t see anyone running without shoes.”

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.