
DATE: 8 June 2021
LOCATION: Netherlands
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: Syria
LANGUAGE: English

Broadcast quality footage available at the IOC Newsroom: http://iocnewsroom.com

STORY SCRIPT:
Syrian badminton player Aram Mahmoud, now a refugee in the Netherlands, has been selected for the IOC Refugee Olympic Team for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

After fleeing war-torn Syria, Aram has built a new life in the Dutch city of Almere: “With the situation being very dangerous for me in Syria I decided to leave - I could not go to school any more or practice. I was very lucky to meet good people and they helped me a lot to be where I have to be.”

Aram says sports is “the most important thing in my life” and he has made significant progress in badminton rankings, moving from 900 into the top 200. He reached the quarter-finals of the Portuguese International Championships in 2019 and now has his sights on the top 100.

He is one of one of 56 refugee athletes currently supported by the IOC through the Olympic Solidarity Scholarship for Refugee Athletes programme and wants his journey to Tokyo 2020 selection to inspire others:

“This team is very important also for other people, for motivation to work hard, and like there is nothing impossible to reach your dream.”

The 29-member IOC Refugee Olympic team (EOR)* initiative at the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 is a continuation of the IOC’s commitment to play its part in addressing the global refugee crisis, and another opportunity to continue to convey the message of solidarity and hope to millions of refugees and internally displaced athletes around the world.

*The IOC Refugee Olympic Team will compete in Tokyo under the French acronym EOR which stands for Équipe Olympique des Réfugiés.

SHOTLIST:
00:02 Aram Mahmoud full frame returning the shuttlecock continuously
00:08 Wide shot of Aram returning the shuttlecock to his coach.

00:14 SOUNDBITE: Aram Mahmoud, IOC Refugee Olympic Team (EOR), Tokyo 2020, Badminton (English Language)
Q. How did you become a refugee?
"With the situation like being very dangerous for me in Syria, I decided to leave Syria because I can’t have, like, better for me to be like for my future and… because I cannot going to school anymore and to practice also, like a normal player. I decided to leave Syria and to go to Europe."

00:42 Close up of Coach hands serves shuttlecocks
00:46 Mid shot of Coach serving shuttlecocks
00:49 Wide shot of Aram jumping up to hit shuttlecocks

00:55 SOUNDBITE: Aram Mahmoud, IOC Refugee Olympic Team (EOR), Tokyo 2020, Badminton (English Language)
Q. How has sport made a difference to your life as a refugee?
"I was very lucky to meet too many good people and they helped me a lot to start and to be where I have to be, on the right way. And that’s why I came to Almere and I play now for Almere club, and they helped me a lot to start and to be what I am now."

01:27 Aram repeatedly hits shuttlecocks from a side angle.
01:31 Close up of a shuttlecock on the floor
01:35 Lots of shuttlecocks on the floor with Aram at the back hitting them

01:44 SOUNDBITE: Aram Mahmoud, IOC Refugee Olympic Team (EOR), Tokyo 2020, Badminton (English Language)
Q. Which teams are you supporting?
"I will support all the player around the world and for me because I am not going to play for Syria, and also I cannot play for The Netherlands because I cannot play after this for Syria again. Like for me the refugees team is a very big, is a very good choice for me. And I am support like all of them, like I support all the player from The Netherlands as well as from Syria and all the players also from the Refugees Team."

02:12 Coach instructs Aram over net – shot from behind coach; CAMERA PANS focus on Aram
02:17 Coach serves shuttlecocks – shot through net
02:22 Low shot: Aram and coach play in background, shuttlecocks on floor in foreground; shuttlecocks fly towards camera

02:30 SOUNDBITE: Aram Mahmoud, IOC Refugee Olympic Team (EOR), Tokyo 2020, Badminton (English Language)
Q. Why is it important to have a Refugee Olympic Team?
"This team is very important also for other people, for motivation to, for them to like, work hard, and like there is nothing impossible to reach for your dream." -- ENDS --

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