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STORY HEADLINE: Congolese judoka Popole Misenga selected again to compete for IOC Refugee Olympic Team for Tokyo 2020

DATE: 8 June 2021
LOCATION: Brazil
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: Democratic Republic of Congo
LANGUAGE: Portuguese
Broadcast quality footage available at the IOC Newsroom: http://iocnewsroom.com

STORY SCRIPT:
Brazil-based Congolese refugee Popole Misenga has been included in this year’s Refugee Olympic team for Tokyo 2020, having also been part of the Refugee Olympic Team in Rio 2016.

Judoka Popole was just nine years old when he fled fighting in Kisangani, in the Democratic Republic of Congo. He was rescued in a forest having been separated from his family and taken to the capital Kinshasa. It was at a centre for displaced children he discovered judo.

He sought asylum at the 2013 world championships in Rio, after being regularly deprived of food for losing in a competition:
“I’ve slept on the street and eaten food from the trash. My life was not easy. I can’t stand to see people suffering like this, says Popole. “My dream is to one day make an association in my country to help people - children, old, mothers.”

Misenga is one of 56 refugee athletes currently supported by the IOC through the Olympic Solidarity Scholarship for Refugee Athletes programme. With passionate support from the Rio crowd in 2016, he won his first bout before losing to the world champion. He aims to create more history for the Refugee Olympic Team in Tokyo.

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:
BRASÍLIA JUDO GRAND SLAM 2019, Brasilia,
00:02 Popole walks towards the bus for the competition in Brasilia
00:06 Entering the competition center
00:10 Popole facing the camera ready for his warm up

00:16 SOUNDBITE: Popole Misenga, IOC Refugee Olympic Team (EOR), Tokyo 2020, Judo, 90kg (Portuguese Language)
Q. What is your sporting target?
“I really want to be a judo champion. Because at the 2016 Olympics, I did a lot of interviews all over the world, I talked a lot. I know I can win, have my life like this, fighting my sport, training and fighting again. But I don't just want to fight, I want to win a medal.”

00:46 Popole detail of feet during warm-up
00:50 Popole stretching exercise for warm up to fight

00:56 SOUNDBITE: Popole Misenga, IOC Refugee Olympic Team (EOR), Tokyo 2020, Judo, 90kg (Portuguese Language)
Q. How has your experience as a refugee changed you?
“I've been on the street, slept on the street, slept outside. I've eaten food from the trash. I've been through this, my life was not easy, too much difficulty, battle and struggle. God was looking at me too, he knew that one day I would come to a country and become a father, also helping his wife's son. A step-son that I help in everything. Because there’s fathers who don’t care, don’t do anything. I do everything as a parent because it is normal for me. I can’t stand to see people suffering like this, going through needs. Because I already know how these experiences in life hurt, I know how they hurt when the person is in need. I know how it hurts.”

01:58 Popole warming watched by coach Geraldo Bernardes
02:03 Popole warming up with coach Geraldo Bernardes
02:13 Popole enters the arena to fight in the competition
02:18 Popole fighting Galarreta Villar Yuta of Peru
02:23 Three different shots of Popole’s bout against Galarreta Villar Yuta
02:53 Match referee announces Galarreta Villar Yuta of Peru the winner
02:58 Popole walking away from the arena

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