STORY SCRIPT:

Germany-based Syrian Refugee boxer Wessam Salamana will fight as part of the IOC Refugee Olympic Team at Tokyo 2020.

Wessam represented Syria at the Olympic Games London 2012 before having to flee war-torn Syria with his wife and daughter. He had worked in the ministry of oil and lived in the countryside in Damascus before the difficult decision to leave in 2015.

The family faced a treacherous trip over land and sea through many countries before finally reaching Germany and settling in Saarbrucken, where he now has a son and a second daughter.

The chance to resume boxing and take part in another Olympics has been precious to Wessam, one of 56 refugee athletes currently supported by the IOC through Olympic Solidarity Scholarship for Refugee Athlete Programme. “After the Olympics my goal is an open boxing school, with many refugees allowed to train with me,” he says.

“Sport is important to me, my father was an athlete and I went to soccer with my father. So that means everything. I would like to win a medal in Tokyo and make my parents and family and friends proud of me.”

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 Wessam Salamana walking towards camera arriving at his gym for training
00:08 Wessam tying up his boots, pan up to his face
00:16 Wessam tapes hands
00:22 Wessam warming up and stretching

00:27 SOUNDbite: Wessam Salamana, IOC Refugee Olympic Team (EOR), Tokyo 2020, Boxing (-57kg) (Arabic Language).
Q. What is special about boxing as a sport?
“I like boxing very much, as I can maintain a healthy body during exercise, and because boxing is characterized by fairness at the same time, it is based on a competition between one boxer against another one in one arena in presence of a referee. I also like it a lot because it helps keep my body healthy.”

00:44 Wessam shadow boxing around the gym

00:56 SOUNDbite: Wessam Salamana, IOC Refugee Olympic Team (EOR), Tokyo 2020, Boxing (-57kg) (Arabic Language).
Q. How has boxing helped you?
“Boxing helped me a lot in integrating with the German people. Through boxing and sports in general, a person can get to know many different cultures and integrate with them in the framework of sports.”

01:09 Wessam’s coach putting his boxing gloves on
01:15 Wessam hitting a punch bag
01:22 Wessam in the ring with his coach hitting a training glove

01:28 SOUNDbite: Wessam Salamana, IOC Refugee Olympic Team (EOR), Tokyo 2020, Boxing (-57kg) (Arabic Language).
Q. What is your message to other refugees?
“I send my message to all refugees all over the world not to despair, for whoever has a dream must fulfill one day.”

01:35 Wessam’s coach fitting his protective headgear
01:40 Wessam sparing in the ring with another boxer
00:44 Wide shot of the ring with Wessam sparing with another boxer

01:50 SOUNDbite: Wessam Salamana, IOC Refugee Olympic Team (EOR), Tokyo 2020, Boxing (-57kg) (Arabic Language).
Q. Are refugees misunderstood?
“I want to send a message to everyone who views refugees as bad people. On the contrary, I believe that everyone who accompanied a refugee knows that he is a good person and a completely normal one like any normal person, but circumstances are what forced him to leave his country and move to another country.”

02:06 Wide shot of the boxing ring and gym, Wessam still sparing
02:12 Mid shot of Wessam sparing in the ring pan down to legs of boxers
02:18 Wessam sparing shot between the ropes

02:26 SOUNDbite: Wessam Salamana, IOC Refugee Olympic Team (EOR), Tokyo 2020, Boxing (-57kg) (German Language).
Q. How has sport helped you?
“I would say, first of all, sport is good for your health and your soul. I think it also helps integrate refugees into society. You can meet people through sports and then get to know them through travel or barbecues or doing things together. With sport, you talk about sports, not politics or religion or topics like that. Sport is just sport.”

03:11 Wessam taking a drink of water
03:15 Wassam pretending to hit the camera lens

-- ENDS --

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