STORY HEADLINE: Iranian refugee kayaker Saeid Fazloula included in IOC Refugee Olympic Team for Tokyo 2020

DATE: 8 June 2021
LOCATION: Germany
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: Iran
LANGUAGE: English

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

STORY SCRIPT:

German-based kayaker Saeid Fazloula, an Iranian Refugee, will compete in his first Olympics for the IOC Refugee Olympic Team in Tokyo 2020.

Fazloula received clearance to be eligible for the Refugee team in February, and can now celebrate his inclusion as one of 56 refugee athletes currently supported by the IOC through the Olympic Solidarity Scholarship for Refugee Athletes programme.

“Sport is very important” says Saeid, “If I didn’t do my sport I was only in the Refugees camp, I didn’t have a job and money and was depressed. “I know about a Refugee’s life but the important thing is to never give up. You need to be strong, in body and mentally.”

Now he trains six days per week in Germany and says he is learning and improving every day.

When Saeid was still in Iran he competed in the Asian Games - now he will get to compete in kayak on the biggest stage, the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

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 Equipe Olympique des Réfugiés.

SHOTLIST:
00:02 Saeid Fazloula arriving at training
00:10 Saeid on the rowing machine in the gym
00:17 Wide shot of Saeid walking out of the gym

00:22 SOUNDBYTE: Saeid Fazloula, IOC Refugee Olympic Team (EOR), Tokyo 2020, Canoeing (English Language).
Q. How do you feel to be a member of the Refugee Olympic Team?
“I think it’s a very big moment for me, for my friends, for my girlfriend and for my club, for my family in Iran, for the Iranian people who know. It’s a very big moment for me. I’m a little bit nervous.”

00:38 Saeid carrying his canoe to the water
00:45 Saeid pushing off in his canoe
00:56 Saeid practising his start
01:10 Wide shot of Saeid out on the water in the distance
01:15 Wide shot of Saeid paddling towards camera

01:21 SOUNDbite: Saeid Fazloula, IOC Refugee Olympic Team (EOR), Tokyo 2020, Canoeing (English Language).
Q. How important has sport been to you?
“Sport is very important. If I didn’t do my sport, I was only in the Refugees Camp, I didn’t have a job and no money, I was depressed. Yeah, sport is very important, I think.”

01:40 Wide shot of Saeid paddling away
01:45 Saeid paddling his canoe under the camera
01:51 Mid shot of Saeid in canoe paddling past camera

01:57 SOUNDbite: Saeid Fazloula, IOC Refugee Olympic Team (EOR), Tokyo 2020, Canoeing (English Language).
Q. How have you found your move to Germany?
“I didn't have any money. The mentality was very different, the German and the Iranian mentality are very different. And you know, that's helped me. It's helped me. And I tell myself, okay? You are strong. You can keep fighting, stay strong and give your best.”

02:30 Saeid paddling past camera
02:33 Saeid drifting up to camera in canoe

02:44 SOUNDbite: Saeid Fazloula, IOC Refugee Olympic Team (EOR), Tokyo 2020, Canoeing (English Language).
Q. What advice do you have for other Refugees?
“You know, never give up. I was a refugee. I am refugee. I know how is the refugee’s life but the important thing is never give up.”

02:55 Saeid paddles up to the pier
03:00 Saeid sitting in his canoe at the pier
03:06 Saeid exiting the gym to be greeted by his dog

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