STORY HEADLINE: Syrian refugee Sanda Aldass to compete in Judo for IOC Refugee Olympic Team at Tokyo 2020

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:
Dutch-based Judoka Sanda Aldass has been included in the IOC Refugee Olympic Team that will be part of the Tokyo 2020 Games.

Originally from the Syrian capital Damascus, Sanda was forced to flee her war-torn country through Turkey to the Netherlands, later joined by her husband and son.

She was invited by the International Judo Federation to join their support programme for Refugee athletes, and will now compete on the Olympic stage as one of 56 athletes supported by the IOC Refugee Athlete Scholarship programme.

"It is a dream come true," says Sanda. "I cannot compete for my country, and I also cannot compete for the Netherlands. I’m so glad the IOC and International Judo Federation have solved this problem because now we can follow our dreams. It is more than a huge honour for me.”

Sanda’s two other children were born in the Netherlands and she has balanced motherhood with training:

“Sport is my life," she says. “I am glad to be representing refugees all over the world.”

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 Sanda Aldass jogging to warm up
00:07 Sanda crawling along the mat to warm up
00:11 Sanda warming up with training partner
00:15 Sanda on mat moves into grappling with her coach

00:28 SOUNDBITE: Sanda Aldass, IOC Refugee Olympic Team (EOR), Tokyo 2020, Judo-57kg (English Language).
Q. What does it mean to you to compete at the Games?
“It's a dream coming true you know, I cannot participate for my country. I also cannot participate for the Netherlands, so glad that the IOC and the International Judo Federation could have solved this problem because now we can play for the Refugee Olympic Team itself and then follow our dreams. You know, you cannot just stop because you don't have a country to present at the Olympics.”

00:39 overlaid close up of Sanda tying her belt
01:03 Wide shot of Sanda throwing her coach over her shoulder
01:08 Wide shot of Sanda being thrown to the mat by her training partner

01:16 SOUNDBITE: Sanda Aldass, IOC Refugee Olympic Team (EOR), Tokyo 2020, Judo-57kg (English Language).
Q. What does it mean to you to represent the Refugee Olympic Team?
“I'm just honored and glad that I'm representing refugees all over the world. Of course, it will be nice to represent each and every sport person in the world. But all the time refugees have special conditions. And to be the one who is representing them it's more than a huge big honor for me.”

01:36 Sanda standing waiting to fight
01:41 Wide shot of Sanda fighting her coach
01:50 Wide shot of Sanda grappling with her coach on the mat

01:57 SOUNDBITE: Sanda Aldass, IOC Refugee Olympic Team (EOR), Tokyo 2020, Judo-57kg (English Language).
Q. How will competing in the Games change your life?
“People actually here in this country respect refugees so much, but to have a refugee who may be participating in the Olympic Games, then everyone will look at you differently. Everyone will salute, you will be happy to know you and we're happy like now we can fit more in the society. Not being looked at only as refugees.”

02:23 Sanda forcing her coach to submit on the mat

02:33 SOUNDBITE: Sanda Aldass, IOC Refugee Olympic Team (EOR), Tokyo 2020, Judo-57kg (English Language).
Q. How important is sport to your life?
“Sport is my life. I did it for a long time, so it's literally all of my life, not part of my life.”

02:46 Sanda and her training partner bow to their coach
02:50 Wide shot of Sanda, her coach and training partners sitting on the mat talking
02:54 Close up of Sanda

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Story script and Shot log

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