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STORY HEADLINE: Belgium-based Afghan refugee and Taekwondo fighter Abdullah Sediqi selected for IOC Refugee Olympic Team for Tokyo 2020

DATE: 8 June 2021
LOCATION: Antwerp, Belgium
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: Afghanistan
LANGUAGE: English
Broadcast quality footage available at the IOC Newsroom: http://iocnewsroom.com

STORY SCRIPT:
Afghan refugee and Taekwondo fighter Abdullah Sediqi has been included in the IOC Refugee Olympic Team which will compete at Tokyo 2020.

Abdullah, who fled Afghanistan from Belgium in 2017, began practising Taekwondo at the age of eight after being inspired by a fellow countryman: “I saw on TV my teammate Rohullah Nikpai - he got a bronze medal in the World Championships. I then focused on Taekwondo and I wanted to do Taekwondo in my dreams and after this I felt okay I can do this.”

After winning Asian youth titles, the fighter continued his winning streak in his new life in Belgium. He took first place at the International Brussels Cup 2017 and won the Tess Cup in the same year.

Abdullah, one of 56 athletes currently supported by the IOC through the Olympic Solidarity Scholarship for refugee Athletes programme, says: “For me the good thing is fighting, I really like to fight. I present myself to the big competition and it’s really good for me.”

He now trains intensively twice a day in Antwerp, his dedication rewarded by his place in the IOC Refugee Olympic Team. “My message to all refugees around the world is to believe in your dreams, keep thinking about what you want to do, and big things and good things will come.”

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 Abdullah warms up, camera pans left and right.
00:02 SOUNDBITE: Abdullah Sediqi, IOC Refugee Olympic Team (EOR), Tokyo 2020, Taekwondo. (English Language).
Q. How can sport help refugees?
'I want to go to the Olympic Games and I have had help from the IOC, now from the Belgian national team, so they are helping me to achieve my dreams to participate in the Olympic Games.'

00:29 Various of Abdullah sparring towards camera.
00:33 Low shot of Abdullah’s feet, training and kicking.

00:38 SOUNDBITE: Abdullah Sediqi, IOC Refugee Olympic Team (EOR), Tokyo 2020, Taekwondo. (English Language).
Q. Why do you like Taekwondo?
'For me the good thing is fighting, I really like to fight. And I present myself to the big competition and it's really good for me.'

00:52 Close up of coach and Abdullah practising with kick pad.
00:59 Abdullah and coach in training.

01:06 SOUNDBITE: Abdullah Sediqi, IOC Refugee Olympic Team (EOR), Tokyo 2020, Taekwondo. (English Language).
Q. Why did you take up Taekwondo?
'I saw on the TV our, my teammate, Rohullah Nikpai, he got a bronze medal in the World Championships, I think. I then focused on Taekwondo and I wanted to do Taekwondo in my dreams and after this I felt - okay I can do this, and then I started Taekwondo.'

01:29 Shot from behind Abdullah as he trains.
01:35 Close up of coach and Abdullah practising with kick pad.

01:44 SOUNDBITE: Abdullah Sediqi, IOC Refugee Olympic Team (EOR), Tokyo 2020, Taekwondo. (English Language).
Q. When did you get the news that you were one of the best athletes in your sport?
'First you have to take medals, and then you can move up the rankings, then you will be able to go to big competitions like the Olympics or World Championships, then I feel okay, now I am in this, and I can go.'

01:54 Various of Abdullah resistance training with band around waist held by coach.

02:08 SOUNDBITE: Abdullah Sediqi, IOC Refugee Olympic Team (EOR), Tokyo 2020, Taekwondo. (English Language).
Q. How does it feel to be considered for the Olympic Refugee Team?
"I feel really, really good, and I want to be in the Olympic Games 2020, and I feel if I go there, I am sure I can take a medal."

02:21 Abdullah takes a break after training.

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