
Olympics: Refugee Team to compete in Tokyo, 29 athletes from around the world. Mr. Bach (IOC), “message of hope”

The names of the 29 athletes, 19 men and 10 women (pictured), who will make up the Refugee Olympic Team that will compete in Tokyo under the flag of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), were announced in Lausanne today. The initiative is also supported by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR). It is “a message of hope” to the world, said IOC President Thomas Bach, and a way to “raise awareness through sport of the plight of over 80 million displaced people worldwide”. The athletes were selected from a group of 56 young men and women from 13 different countries, who could train thanks to the scholarships provided under the “Olympic Solidarity” programme in 12 different disciplines: athletics, badminton, boxing, canoeing, cycling, judo, karate, taekwondo, shooting, swimming, weightlifting, and wrestling. “Congratulations to all of you”, said Mr Bach, addressing the athletes. “I speak on behalf of the entire Olympic Movement when I say that we cannot wait to meet you in person and to see you compete”. “When you come together in Tokyo on July 23 - he added -, you will send a powerful message of solidarity, resilience and hope to the world. You are an integral part of our Olympic community, and we welcome you with open arms”. The Refugee Team will be the second, after Greece, to enter the stadium at the opening ceremony in Tokyo. Ten of these athletes were already part of the team that, for the first time, participated in the Olympic Games in Rio in 2016. After Rio, the Olympic Refugee Foundation (ORF) was established to support initiatives for young people worldwide.

Sarah Numico