



International  
Olympic  
Committee

Public

Attn. Ms Dragana KORLJAN  
Officer-in-charge  
Special Procedures Branch  
OHCHR

BY EMAIL  
Lausanne, 27 November 2024

### **UN OHCHR - Joint Communication from Special Procedures**

Dear Ms Korljan,

This is in reference to the Joint Communication from 6 UN Human Rights Council Special Procedures mandate holders addressed to the IOC President on 5 August 2024, with regards the issue of participation of Afghan women and girls in sport.

As you know from the various public communications available on the IOC website, the IOC Executive Board has been closely monitoring the situation of the Olympic Movement in Afghanistan since the Taliban regime seized power in 2021, in close coordination with the IOC-recognised NOC of Afghanistan. In the first days, weeks and months of the crisis, the IOC and the Olympic Movement at large took immediate action to help and facilitate the evacuation of hundreds of members of the Afghan Olympic community from the country. As a further step to respond to the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, the IOC worked closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to deliver financial assistance directly to the Olympic community in the country.

In addition to this emergency action and special humanitarian effort, the IOC, together with the IOC-recognised NOC of Afghanistan (whose leadership was elected prior to the regime change in the country and is now partly living in exile), has initiated proactively a regular dialogue with the *de facto* sports authorities in the country in order in particular to address the key issue of access to sport for women and girls in the country and has repeatedly reiterated its call on the relevant *de facto* authorities in the country to urgently reverse the restrictions imposed by the Taliban regime and ensure safe access to sport for women and girls in the country without discrimination.

It is worth recalling at this stage that the current restrictions imposed by the Taliban regime on the Afghan women and girls go far beyond sport and constitute a challenge which has yet to be addressed and resolved by the international community at large.

In parallel and despite the current situation in the country, the IOC, in close collaboration with the IOC-recognised NOC of Afghanistan, has continued to support Afghan athletes (both female and male athletes, inside and outside the country) to ensure the participation of mixed gender athletes and teams in international sports competitions,

with a specific focus on those aiming at qualifying for the Olympic Games Paris 2024, in particular through Olympic scholarships. The IOC has also recommended that the International Sports Federations take appropriate decisions, along the lines indicated in the [IOC Executive Board decision dated 6 December 2022](#), at their respective levels and for their respective events.

While there is, unfortunately, no tangible progress so far in the country despite numerous and repeated attempts with the *de facto* Afghan sports authorities to reverse the current restrictions on access to sport for women and girls in the country (recognising, once again, that it is an issue which goes far beyond sport itself), these joint efforts have resulted in particular in the participation of a record number of Afghan female athletes in the Hangzhou Asian Games which took place in 2023, and a gender-equal Afghan team (i.e. three female athletes and three male athletes) in the Olympic Games Paris 2024, entered by the IOC-recognised NOC of Afghanistan as per the applicable rules within the Olympic Movement.

These significant achievements are certainly not sufficient but, in the context of the country, are still an important symbol of hope, and have been received positively by the Afghan Olympic community and worldwide. This approach has been supported by many Afghan athletes, in particular female athletes, who reiterated that, under the current circumstances more than ever, they need the support of the IOC and the IOC-recognised NOC of Afghanistan.

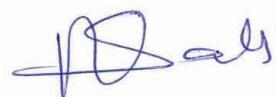
Last but not least, the IOC enabled the participation of a Refugee Olympic Team at the Olympic Games Paris 2024, which included female athletes from Afghanistan holding a refugee status duly recognised by the UNHCR, who qualified in their sport through their respective International Federation qualification system. Beyond, the IOC signalled not only its consistent but unyielding support for women and girls, by appointing Ms Masomah Ali Zada as the Chef de Mission of the Refugee Olympic Team at the Olympic Games Paris 2024. A refugee from Afghanistan herself, Ms Ali Zada competed as a member of the Refugee Olympic Team at the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020.

With regards the possibility for Afghan female athletes to compete in international sports competitions which fall under the specific jurisdiction of an International Federation, we invite you to reach out to the respective International Federations for further details.

Thank you for your kind attention and please rest assured that the IOC is fully committed to pursue these efforts and to keep doing its best, within its remit and where possible, to continue to support the Afghan athletes (particularly the Afghan female athletes) and Olympic community, both inside and outside the country, under these extremely difficult circumstances.



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