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Athletes

cont'd from pg 10

43 athletes selected as contenders for the team, more than half are runners from central and western Africa, Miro said.

"I was touched by the personal story of each one," he said in an interview with The Associated Press. "But I also was really touched by how much sport means in their lives, not only for the 43, but for all those I met."

IOC President Thomas Bach said he expects between five and 10 athletes will make the team. Miro put the figure at between five and seven. The final selection will be announced by the IOC at its next executive board meeting in June.

"We want to send a message of hope to all the refugees of the world," Bach said.

Miro said 23 of the candidates fled conflicts in Africa, including South Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, Congo, Rwanda, Burundi and Mali. A handful of others left Syria, with a few from Iran and Iraq. In addition to track and field, some of the athletes compete in swimming, judo, taekwondo and shooting.

The IOC has already publicly identified three athletes under consideration: 17-year-old Syrian swimmer Yusra Mardini, female Iranian taekwondo athlete Raheleh Asemani, and male judoka Popole Misenga of Congo. Mardini is training in Germany, Asemani in Belgium and Misenga in Brazil.

Mardini and her older sister, Sarah, were on an inflatable boat with other refugees making the perilous trip from Turkey to Greece a few months ago when their small dinghy started taking on water in the Aegean Sea. Most of the refugees on the overcrowded



In this Nov. 9, 2015 file photo of Yusra Mardini from Syria poses during a training session in Berlin, Germany. They've fled war and violence in the Middle East and Africa. They've crossed treacherous seas in small dinghies and lived in dusty refugee camps. They include a teenage swimmer Yusra Mardini from Syria, long-distance runners from South Sudan and judo and taekwondo competitors from Congo, Iran and Iraq. They are striving to achieve a common goal: To compete in the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. Not for their home countries, but as part of the first ever team of refugee athletes.

boat couldn't swim. So the sisters and three others who were also good swimmers jumped into the water. For three hours, they clung onto ropes hanging from the side and helped guide the boat to the Greek island of Lesbos.

The Mardini sisters eventually made it to Germany, where a local charity put them in touch with the Wasserfreunde Spandau 04 swimming club in Berlin, based near their refugee center.

They have been training at the pool, which was built for the 1936 Olympics, and Yusra — a butterfly specialist — was selected as a possible member of the Olympic team.

Asemani left Iran in 2012 for reasons she has not disclosed and arrived in Belgium, where she works for the postal service and trains with Belgium's national taekwondo team. Fighting under the World Taekwondo Federation flag at the European Olympic qualifying tournament in Istanbul, she clinched a spot for the Rio Games. It's possible she could compete for Belgium if she is granted citizenship.

"It has been such a hard journey. I was lost," Asemani said on the WTF website. "Many times in my head I thought it

would not happen because of politics, visa problems, lack of money and I couldn't travel to (many) ranking events. ... Rio is a dream for me. Hope has carried me to the Olympics. Now I will give all I have to win."

Misenga and Yolande Mabika fled Congo three years ago and sought asylum in Brazil during the 2013 world judo championships in Rio.

They have been training with the Brazilian judo federation.

"I've seen too much war, too much death," Misenga told The Guard-

ian newspaper. "I want to stay clean so I can do my sport. I represent everyone. I'll get a medal for all refugees."

The largest number of potential Olympic athletes was drawn from the Kakuma refugee camp in northwestern Kenya,

about 55 miles (90 kilometers) from the border with South Sudan, a five-year-old country that has been wracked by civil war since 2013.

Tens of thousands have died and at least 2 million people have been displaced from their homes.

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Pastor Steve Bills, Executive Minister
American Baptist Convention of the Central Pacific Coast
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Application deadline: Thursday, March 31, 2016

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3-23-16

METRO REQUEST FOR BIDS

2791 Lighting Fixture Upgrade Oregon Convention Center

The Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission, a department of Metro, a metropolitan service district organized under the laws of the State of Oregon and the Metro Charter, located at 600 N.E. Grand Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97232-2736, is soliciting bids for Lighting Fixture Upgrades at the Oregon Convention Center Sealed bids are due no later than 2:00 pm April 14, 2016 in Metro's business offices at 600 NE Grand Avenue, Portland, OR 97232-2736, Attention: Julie Hoffman, Procurement Analyst, RFB 2791. Contractor shall provide all equipment, materials and labor to supply and install replacement light fixtures for energy efficiency in various locations of the Oregon Convention Center (OCC). Locations include Both Glazed Towers, Oregon Ballroom, Portland Ballroom, Parking Garage, Exterior Wall locations and Interior Loading Dock locations.

3-23-16



Juneteenth seeks volunteers for celebration

Juneteenth Oregon, a community organization, seeks volunteers to help plan **Portland's 2016 Juneteenth celebration of freedom on Saturday, June 18th.**

Portland's Juneteenth Planning Committee would like to include more people to make this event an even greater success. The committee meets monthly and then more frequently as the date for the event approaches.

The Portland festival will again feature actors, who portray the likes of Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman and Abraham Lincoln. A special pavilion is established where festival visitors can talk to these actors in character to hear their memorable words, musical performers and host a Village marketplace. Community organizations, social services, others who provide information to the public are welcome to participate. Businesses and other groups are also invited to join as sponsors.

If you are interested in becoming a Planning Committee member, please **contact Doris Rush at 503-764-8836, or email juneteenthoregon@gmail.com.**



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