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International Olympic Committee

Lima Convention Center

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Lima

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Dear Members of the International Olympic Committee,

My name is Kevin Baron. I am a twenty-two-year-old American from the suburbs of Seattle, Washington. As a child, by attending multi-sports summer camps and by participating in various athletics, I became familiar with the unifying powers of sportsmanship and friendly competition. The Summer and Winter Olympic Games, which I remember viewing as often as possible, demonstrated to me those same powers at the international level. The Games inspired me to become an Olympian one day, to compete in the sport I chose for its universality, the sport whose fans call it the world’s game: soccer.

However, at a young age I began to realize, and as I grew into adulthood I understood with increasing conviction, that for multitudinous reasons, I wish neither to represent nor to compete for my native country, the United States of America.

From the same young age, I have wondered whether there were others like me, from here in the United States or from elsewhere, who aspired to the Olympic standard, yet who felt restrained by fetters of nationality. Research showed me that, indeed, your committee has been historically gracious in allowing and encouraging such athletes to compete.

Profound joy and awe filled me and others from around the world as we witnessed Guor Marial of South Sudan run under the Olympic flag at the 2012 London Games to honor those of his family whom he had lost in the Sudanese civil war. Together we rejoiced again in seeing nine Independent Olympic Athletes and ten Refugee Olympic Team members play at the 2016 Games of Rio de Janeiro, where Kuwaiti shooter Fehaid Al-Deehani’s first ever gold medal performance by an Independent invited us to imagine what else might be possible for these athletes.

Combining the full force of my personal motivations with the gravity of the ongoing world refugee crisis addressed by previous Olympic Games, I humbly inquire of the one hundred thirty-first session of the International Olympic Committee convening in Lima, Peru, any and all logistical necessities to the formation of (for the current absence of official terminology) a *Refugee/Independent Olympic Team* to qualify for competition in either or both of the men’s and women’s football tournaments at the Games of the XXXII Olympiad, hosted by Tokyo, Japan in the year 2020.

I understand that such an event requires meticulous and early planning, and that for this reason, my inquiry might already be too late to act upon. Even so, it is my deepest and sincerest hope that this momentous congregation may provide sufficient guidance to fulfill the vision of a team of diverse individuals assembling peaceably to achieve a common goal, which is perhaps the symbol our world needs most.

Thank you all so very much for any consideration. I eagerly await a response upon the adjournment of the present session, whatever it may be.

Kevin Baron