OPEN LETTER TO THE FRENCH FEDERATION OF BASKETBALL (FFBB) AND THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF BASKETBALL (FIBA)

March 8, 2024

“I love basketball, my family, and my faith. It would break my heart to give up any one of those, and yet that is what the current French Federation of Basketball guidelines are forcing me to do.” —Diaba Konaté, French Basketball Player

Dear Jean-Pierre Siutat, CEO of French Federation of Basketball/Fédération Française de Basketball (FFBB) and Andreas Zagklis, Secretary-General of International Basketball Federation/Fédération Internationale de Basketball (FIBA),

We the undersigned athletes urge the FFBB to overturn its current policy banning religious headwear, which openly defies international human rights laws and standards by disproportionately impacting and targeting observant Muslim women and girls.

In 2014, FIFA overturned its headscarf ban, and in 2017, Athlete Ally and Shirzanan successfully advocated for FIBA’s headscarf ban to be overturned. This marked a critical milestone in guaranteeing access to sport and fighting discrimination, opening the doors for millions of women and girls in Muslim majority countries to enjoy access to sport. However, the current FFBB ruling blocks that very same access, and defies the principles of equality that led to the FIBA reform. Enabling Muslim women and girls to participate as they are in sport does not threaten public safety, nor are there any reports indicating this causation. On the contrary, excluding a group of people from sports simply because of their religious beliefs and practices goes against the Olympic Charter, which affirms that access to sport is a human right. We will not allow the sport we love to be weaponized against Muslim girls and women.

No person should be excluded from basketball simply because of who they are. Sports has the power to create unity across divides, and allows people of all different backgrounds to come
together for a common goal. No Muslim woman or girl should have to choose between their
religion and the freedom, community, and connection sports can bring.

Today, on International Women’s Day, we urge the FFBB to uphold the principles of Olympism
and ensure that Muslim women and girls can participate in basketball free from discrimination.

In solidarity,

Diaba Konaté, French Basketball Player
Tariq Abdul-Wahad, Former NBA Player and French National Team Member, France & USA
Selma Bacha, Pro Footballer, French National Team, OL, France
Farah Bahoui, Pro Roller Derby, French National Team, France
Sabrina Belkhadra, Pro Boxer, 3x French Champion, France
Mélina Boetti, Former Pro Footballer, France
Saoussen Boudiaf, World Champion Fencer, France & Algeria
Charlotte Boulard, Pro Roller Derby, French National Team, France
Annabelle Caprais, Former Pro Basketball Player, France
Aya Cissoko, Professional Boxer, 3x World Champion, France
Chloé David, Pro Roller Derby, French National Team, France
Vikash Dhorasoo, Former Pro Footballer, French National Team, France
Aminata Diallo, French Pro Footballer, Spain, Saudi Arabia & France
Camille Le Doze, Pro Roller Derby, French National Team, France
Mamoutou Diarra, Former Pro Basketball Player, France
Haikel Drine, Former Judo Champion, French National Team, France
Valentine Dubois, Pro Roller Derby, French National Team, France
Vafessa Fofana, Pro Basketball Player and Ivory Coast National Team Member, France & Ivory
Coast
Gabrielle Faure, Pro Roller Derby, French National Team, France
Diana Gandéga, Former Pro Basketball Player, Mali National Team, France & Mali
Aby Gaye, Pro Basketball Player, France
Marilys Gouaux, Pro Roller Derby, French National Team, France
Georgi Joseph, Pro Basketball Player, Aix Maurienne Savoie Basket, NB Pro B., France
Assa Koita, Former Professional Rugby Player, France
Lahaou Konaté, Professional Basketball Player, LNB Pro A and EuroCup, French National Team,
France
Maïna Joly, Pro Roller Derby, French National Team, France
Casey Legler, Olympian, Swimming, France
Tripy Makonda, Professional Footballer, Luxembourg and France
Amélie Marteau, Pro Roller Derby, French National Team, France
Paccelis Morlende, Former Professional Basketball Player and Current Coach, LNB Pro B, France
Capucine Jourdain de Muizon, Pro Roller Derby, French National Team, France
Earvin Ngapeth, Pro Volleyball Player, French National Team Member, France & Italy
Marc-Antoine Pellin, Pro Basketball Player, French National Team, France
Lindsay Porphyre, Pro Roller Derby, French National Team, France
Manon Praca, Pro Roller Derby Captain, French National Team, France
Mohamed Sissoko, Former Pro Footballer, Mali National Team, France and Mali
Kamila Štěpánová, Former Professional Basketball Player, Slovakia & France
Amara Sy, Professional Basketball Player, LNB Pro A, Mali National team, France and Mali
Djeneba Tandjan, Champion Pro Handball Player, France
Angelo Constantin Tsagarakis, Former Pro Basketball Player, France & Greece
Intisar Abdul-Kader, Pro Runner and Nike Athlete, UK
Bilqis Abdul-Qadir, The First Hijab-wearing Player in NCAA Division I Basketball, USA
Natalie Achonwa, Pro Basketball Player, Minnesota Lynx, WNBA, USA
Lindsay Allen, Pro Basketball Player, Chicago Sky, WNBA, USA
Scout Bassett, World Champion & Paralympian, Track & Field and Triathlon, Current Women's Sports Foundation President, USA
Lindsey Napela Berg, Former Pro Volleyball Player and Olympic Silver Medalist, USA, Italy and Turkey
Batouly Camara, Professional Basketball Player, Guinea's women's basketball team, Spain
Layshia Clarendon, Pro Basketball Player, LA Sparks, WNBA, USA
Natasha Cloud, Pro Basketball Player, Phoenix Mercury, WNBA, USA
Alysha Clark, Pro Basketball Player, Las Vegas Aces, WNBA, USA
Taj Cole, Pro Basketball Player, Athletes Unlimited, USA
JayCee Cooper, Pro Powerlifter, USA
Nesrine Dally, World Champion Muay Thai Fighter, Britain's first Hijabi Muay Thai Athlete, Britain, France & Tunisia
Mamadou Dia, Pro Basketball Player, Senegal
Abby Dunkin, Paralympic Gold Medalist, Wheelchair Basketball, Team USA
Kaitlin Eaton, Paralympian, Wheelchair Basketball, Team USA
Nada ElAraby, Former Pro Footballer, Alexandria Smouha SC, Egypt
Asma El-Badawi, Sudanese-British Basketball Player, Spoken Word Poet, Coach and Activist, Sudan and Britain
Jamad Fiin, Captain, Somalia Women’s National Basketball Team, Somalia and USA
Julie Foudy, Retired Pro Footballer, 2x FIFA Women's World Cup Champion, 2x Olympic Gold Medalist, USA
Jessica Houarra, Former Pro Footballer and Women's National Team Member, France
Angela Hucles, Former Pro Footballer US Women's National Team Member, and 2x Olympic Gold Medalist, USA
Tori Huster, Former Professional Footballer, NWSL, USA
Lori Lindsey, Olympian and Former Pro Footballer, NWSL and US Women's National Soccer Team, USA
Kaiya McCullough, Former Pro Footballer, NWSL, USA
Fitriya Mohamed, Founder, Muslim Women Summer Basketball League, Toronto, Canada
Ibtihaj Muhammad, Olympic Bronze Medalist, Fencing, Team USA, and first American woman to compete in the Olympics in hijab
Lipa Nessa, Former Semi-Pro Footballer Coach and Sports Activist
Alana Nichols, 3x Gold Medalist, Dual Sport Athlete in Wheelchair Basketball and Alpine Skiing, and First Female American to Win Gold in both the Summer and Winter Games, USA
Nneka Ogwumike, Pro Basketball Player, Seattle Storm, WNBA, USA
Khalida Popal, Former Pro Footballer Player, Afghanistan Women’s National Team, Afghanistan & Europe
Azeem Rafiq, Former Professional Cricket Player, Yorkshire County Cricket Club, England
Maya Reddy, Former Pro Golfer, USA
Manal Rostom, Marathoner, Mountaineer, Nike Athlete and Founder of Surviving Hijab, Egypt
Toccara Ross, Former Pro Basketball Player and Current Assistant Coach, USA
Satou Sabally, Pro Basketball Player, Dallas Wings, WNBA, USA
Becky Sauerbrunn, Olympian and Pro Footballer Player, Portland Thorns, NWSL and US Women's National Team, USA
Carrie Sheinberg, Olympian, Alpine Skiing, USA
Breanna Stewart, Pro Basketball Player, NY Liberty, WNBA, USA
Doaa Tawfeek, Olympian, Volleyball and Beach Volleyball, Egypt
Breanna Turner, Pro Basketball Player, Chicago Sky, WNBA, USA
Elizabeth Williams, Pro Basketball Player, Chicago Sky, WNBA, USA
Ayisat Yusuf, Former Pro Footballer Player, Nigerian National Team, Nigeria & Finland

With the Support of:
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