

## 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, FIBA 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

**Pacelis 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 Huarra**, 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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Haïfa Tlili, PhD, Rhéa, Vrije Universiteit Belgium

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The Sport and Rights Alliance