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## **NEW UNDER ARMOUR ATHLETE - YUSRA MARDINI**

***Global sports and innovation brand Under Armour adds the 19-year old swimmer***

***Yusra Mardini to their roster of international athletes***

**Berlin (19. October 2017)** – Today, Under Armour announced the 19-year old Syrian freestyle and butterfly swimmer Yusra Mardini, as part of their team of international athletes.

Yusra Mardini fled her home country Syria in August 2015 and only survived because of her determination and the fact that she was a strong swimmer, saving her life and many others in the process. In 2016, she was one of ten refugees included in the Refugee Olympic Team that competed in the Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games. Yusra Mardini also received the Bambi in the category 'Silent Heroes' together with her sister Sarah, and in the same year had the privilege to hand over the Millennium Bambi to Pope Francis in Rome.

Through her inspirational will, Yusra Mardini was also included in TIME magazine's list of 30 most influential Teens and PEOPLE magazine's 25 Women Changing the World list. Since April 2017, Yusra Mardini has been the youngest Goodwill Ambassador for UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. Mardini does not only swim for herself, but also for the millions of people globally that have been driven from their homes by war and persecution. "There are over 65 million refugees in the world, and I would like to make every one of them proud. People should live their dreams; some may have forgotten their dreams in their plight, so I want to encourage them to realize their dreams one day," commented Mardini. The partnership with Under Armour is another important milestone for Yusra Mardini: "I am very proud to be part of Under Armour, which is such an innovative brand that does things differently. I'm already training in their apparel and footwear, which feels great."

"We are inspired by her drive and accomplishments, both as a person and as an athlete. The way in which she is dealing with life's challenges, both past and present, shows a tremendous amount of character", said Chris Bate, Managing Director, Europe, Under Armour.

Yusra Mardini's manager, Marc Heinkelein of StageField Management added, "Our goal was to find a sports goods manufacturer that on the one hand understands the potential of Yusra Mardini's impressive story and her strong will to succeed whatever the circumstances. And on the other hand to provide her with the best possible conditions to improve her swimming performances and make up lost time, so to speak, due to the Civil War in Syria. Under Armour works with such a great roster of inspirational athletes across the globe, which means we are very proud that Yusra Mardini can join this amazing team. Under Armour's commitment to testimonials, such as Anthony Joshua, Michael Phelps, Misty Copeland, etc., has proven that Under Armour is particularly interested in powerful stories in addition to the sporting performance. In combination with the Under Armour mission, 'We make athletes better!', it was the perfect match."

Under Armour recently launched the *Unlike Any* campaign that pays tribute to women by shining a spotlight on their remarkable talents and stories of WILL, and elevating them to a level beyond comparison. The campaign features a roster of prolific athletes, including American Ballet Theatre® principal ballerina Misty Copeland, long distance runner and Harlem Run Crew founder Alison Désir, world champion sprinter Natasha Hastings, professional stuntwoman Jessie Graff, Chinese taekwondo champion and actress Zoe Zhang and world champion alpine skier Lindsey Vonn. Yusra Mardini also forms part of this prolific UA team of incredible women.

## **Inspiring life at a young age - Yusra Mardini and her incredible journey**

Yusra Mardini was born on the 5th of March 1998 in Syria. Until the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War in 2011 she had a normal childhood and youth. But then everything changed and became increasingly difficult. In 2012 her home was destroyed and a short time later a bomb hit the roof of the indoor pool where she trained. The only decision Yusra Mardini had was to leave Syria. In August 2015 accompanied by her older sister Sarah, they started their uncertain journey direction Europe. Their father saved money over years and they fled to Turkey. From there they took the classic refugee route via boat to Greece. Traffickers led them through the woods for three days without any food or water, only to leave them stranded. They managed to continue their journey in a small rubber dinghy with 18 other people. Shortly after setting off from Turkey, the motor on their boat, which was meant for six people, began to fail. Together with two other men, the sisters jumped over board and started dragging the boat across the Aegean Sea. The salt water burned their skin and eyes, but Yusra and Sarah Mardini continued swimming for over three and a half hours, even after the two other men had given up. Yusra Mardini commented: "I thought it would be a real shame if I drowned in the sea, because I am a swimmer,". But she did not give up and reached the Greek island of Lesbos, from where the sisters came over the Balkan route to Berlin. After surviving the ordeal swimming was far from Yusra Mardini's mind. An Egyptian translator of her refugee home made contact with the Wasserfreunde Spandau 04 swimming club and soon she found a new club and home. Then came the fantastic opportunity to compete in the Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games for the Olympic Refugee Team. A dream came true and one year after fleeing Syria, Yusra Mardini stood in the Olympic Aquatics Stadium. "It was an indescribable feeling to swim at the Olympics," Mardini said. Even after the Olympics, the success story continued to gain momentum.

At the 2017 FINA World Championships in Budapest, despite having a cold, Mardini improved her Olympic butterfly time by one second. She wants to compete at the Tokyo Olympics in 2020. "Syria, Germany, the Refugee Olympic Team – all of them have done a lot for me and therefore I carry all three flags in my heart," says Yusra Mardini. Her numerous fans around the world give her energy and strength, even in difficult moments. Her journey has inspired thousands and through the social media channels fans express their admiration and support. This for Yusra Mardini is worth more than any medal. A book describing her incredible story will be released in May 2018 and a film is also in the making. The British production company *Working Title* acquired the film rights to her life story. Stephen Daldry (*Billy Elliot* and *The Reader*) is tipped to direct it. Yusra Mardini's unique journey tells of violence, mourning, courage, hope and willpower - and promises to be an impressive story which will hit the cinemas worldwide in 2019.

Under Armour's mission is to make athletes better through providing them with the best equipment. This partnership will give Yusra Mardini a positive drive in her preparation towards the Tokyo Olympics Games in 2020. She will also be the face of UA Women along with Misty Copeland and Lindsey Vonn. "We fully support Yusra Mardini on her athletic journey and UA will accompany her every step of the way heading towards Tokyo," said Chris Bate, Managing Director, Europe, Under Armour.

### **About Under Armour Inc.**

Under Armour (NYSE: UA, UA.C), an industry leader in performance footwear, apparel and equipment, revolutionized how athletes across the world dress. Designed to make all athletes better, the brand's innovative products are sold worldwide to athletes at all levels. The Under Armour Connected Fitness™ platform powers the world's largest digital health and fitness community through a suite of applications: UA Record, MapMyFitness, Endomondo and MyFitnessPal. The Under Armour global headquarters is in Baltimore, Maryland. For further information, please visit the Company's website at [www.uabiz.com](http://www.uabiz.com).

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