

OPENING CEREMONY OLYMPIC GAMES PARIS 2024

# AFRICA AND ITS ATHLETE DELEGATIONS LIGHT UP THE SEINE

OLYMPIC GAMES PARIS 2024 OPENING CEREMONY

A SPECTACULAR CEREMONY, GRACED  
BY AFRICAN DELEGATIONS



Opening Ceremony Olympic Games Paris 2024

# Africa and its athlete delegations light up the Seine



**T**he River Seine, which flows through Paris, was chosen by the organisers as the venue for the official opening ceremony of the Olympic Games Paris 2024.

Athletes from across the world put up a show as they waved their flags and paraded down the river in boats. Though the weather

was unfriendly, with a heavy downpour that drenched the city of Paris, it in no way dampened the splendour of a ceremony that, for the first time in history, took place outside a stadium.

Officially opening the Games, French President Emmanuel MACRON declared:

*“I declare open the Paris Olympic Games celebrating the 33rd Olympiad of the modern era”*

This followed a speech delivered by Tony ESTANGUET, the Organising Committee Chair and three-time Olympic champion, who exclaimed:

*“What a sight it is to see you all parading together! For the next fifteen days, you will be the best version of humanity. It is a huge honour to welcome you here 100 years after we last hosted the Summer Games.”*

And IOC President, Thomas BACH, who had these kind words:

*“Finally, the moment is here: welcome to the Olympic Games Paris 2024! My heartfelt thanks to our gracious French hosts. Thank you for welcoming us in such a spectacular way. The Olympic flame will make Paris and all of France shine even brighter.”*

As for the ANOCA President, Mustapha BERRAF, he was full of praise for the African delegations:

*“It was wonderful to see how African athletes communed with other nations at the opening ceremony. This solidarity is unprecedented and spectacular. Honestly, I think there’s nothing more to say. This event is exceptional, exciting ...with such vivid demonstrations, bearing all the cultural, sporting, and especially, human hallmarks.”*



African athletes, over 1000 in all, a 20% increase on last year's participation, made an impressive performance at this spectacular show.

Kenyans, Algerians, Ivorians, Cameroonians, Moroccans, Ethiopians, Somalis, Beninese, Gabonese, Djiboutians, Egyptians, Congolese from the DRC and Senegalese made an impressive show in front of 85 Heads of State and Government who braved the heavy rain, including 12 African Heads of State.

Drenched, dressed in their finest African regalia, the hyped-up athletes from Niger, Nigeria and Norway all joined in with dances and olas on the Diamant Bleu. A fleet of 116 boats sailed along a 6 km route in front of 300,000 spectators.

For African athletes, it was a thrilling experience. Cheick Cissé, 2016 Olympic Taekwondo champion, was overwhelmed:

*"Today is the D-day. As athletes and young Ivorians, we're going to try and make the most of it. It's a very special moment which will be engraved not only in world sport, but also in my personal life. So, I'm very happy to be in Paris, a very beautiful city, the event is well organized."*

Aristote Ndombe IMPELENGA, Congolese swimmer, could not contain his joy:

*"This is my first time taking part in the Olympics. It is a dream come true. It is a coincidence that we are all here in Paris, so I'm very happy to take part in the Games. We all have the team spirit, and as it is commonly said in Congo, "Go leopards, we're all the same", and so we have the team spirit."*

Thanks to its honourable political, sports and Olympic leaders, its stalwart champions and its rich cultural heritage, Africa left its indelible mark on the opening ceremony of the 33<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Olympic Games.

A 4-hour parade that thrilled spectators and television audiences worldwide. Rain, diversity, stars and monuments, the opening ceremony of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games

embodied the Olympic values. Africa was also in the spotlight. Aya Nakamura, the most streamed French-speaking artist in the world, a French-Malian singer, delivered a standout performance alongside stars such as Lady Gaga and Céline Dion who made her highly anticipated musical return with a performance that closed out the Paris 2024 Olympics opener.



# ANOCA President Mustapha BERRAF'S special message to African Athletes taking part in the Olympic Games Paris 2024

## GO FOR VICTORIES, DEAR ATHLETES!

The goal this year at Paris 2024 is to bag more than 50 medals. To do better than the 37 medals won in Tokyo, including 11 gold medals. You can do it.

Never let doubts cross our minds. We have all the human resources and potential we need.

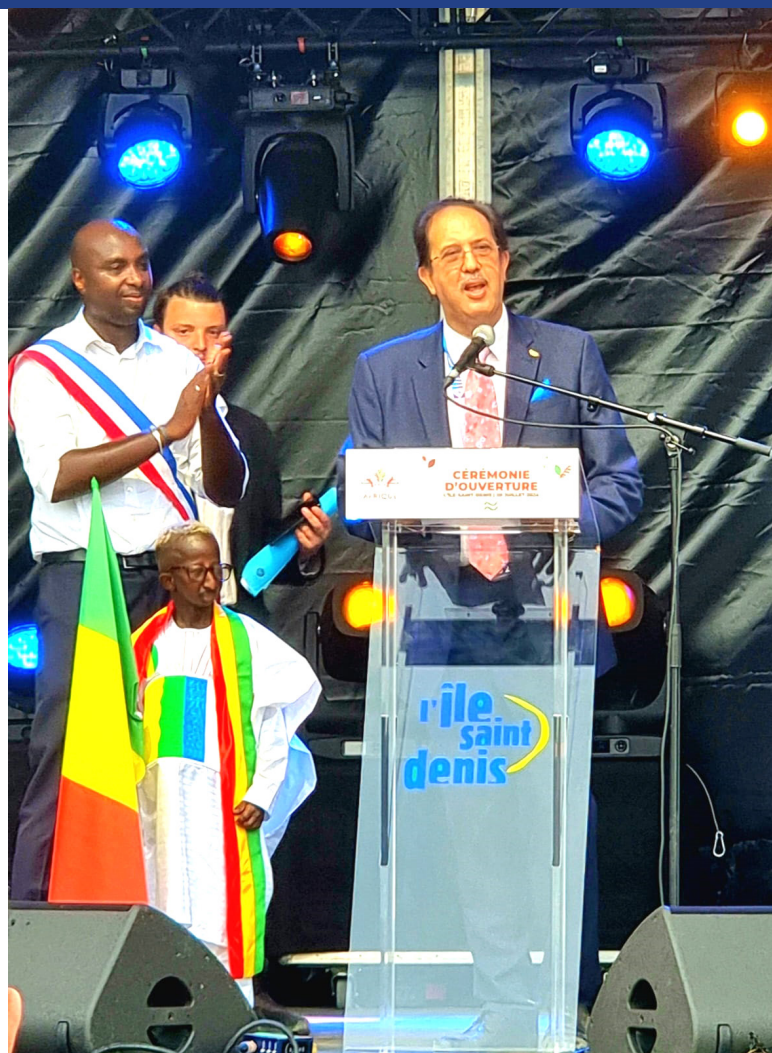
More than 1,000 African athletes, a 20% increase on the previous edition, which implies an average of 50 medals.

ANOCA contributed \$2 million to prepare some fifty athletes in the top 10, along with athletes benefiting from Olympic Solidarity scholarship.

We sincerely thank Olympic Solidarity and the International Olympic Committee, under the stewardship of our friend Thomas Bach.

Dear athletes, Africa is looking up to you. Your legendary valour and your sporting prowess is second to none. Give your very best.

**YOU ARE THE TRUE CHAMPIONS**, We're all behind you, pushing you to the highest heights. The Paris 2024 medals are within reach, dear conquerors.



Be advocates of Fair-Play and players of Olympic Solidarity. The African Olympic and Sports Movement is your number one fan.

Thrill us, do us proud. **VICTORY, VICTORY, VICTORY, GO AFRICA!**



Olympic Games Paris 2024 Opening Ceremony

# A spectacular ceremony, graced by African delegations

“

declare open the Paris Olympic Games celebrating the 33rd Olympiad of the modern era.”

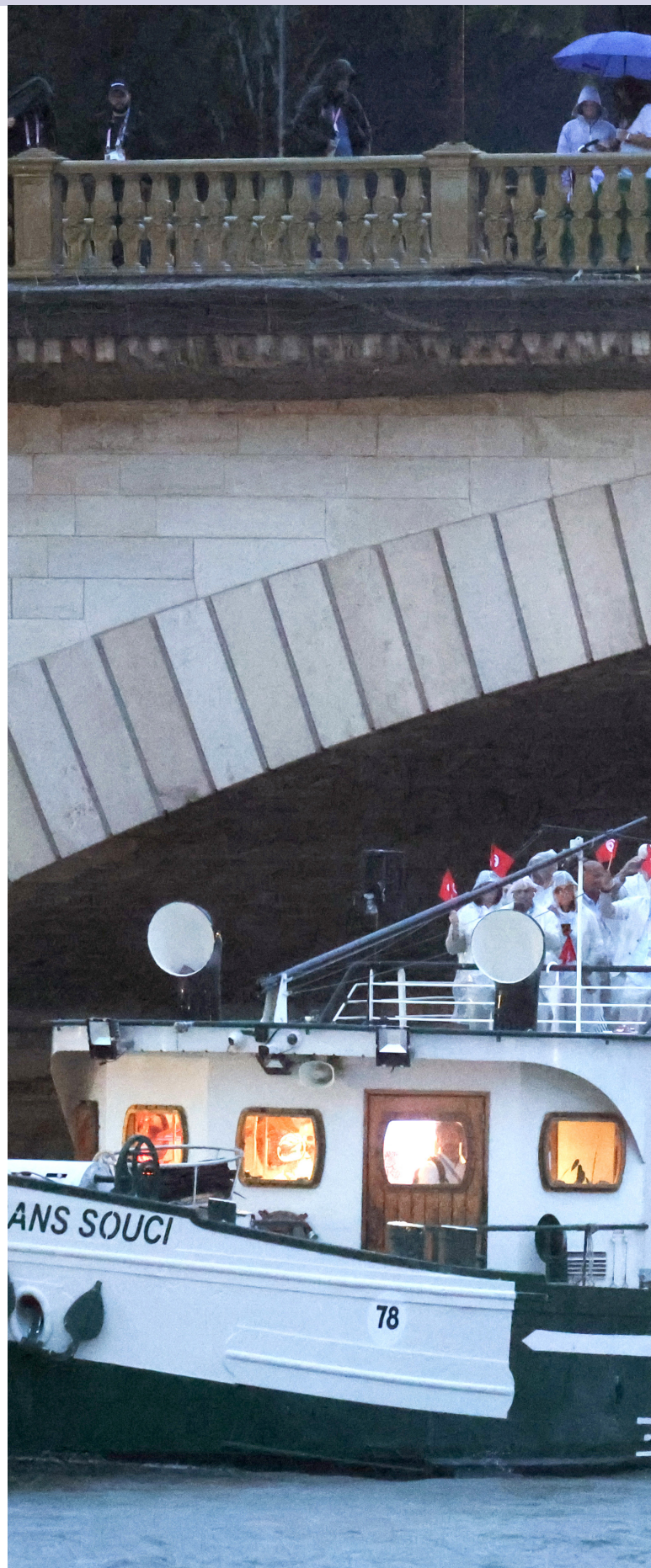
It was with these words that French President Emmanuel

MACRON, at the request of IOC President, Thomas BACH, closed the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games Paris 2024. An exceptional, spectacular, prestigious and colourful opening ceremony, graced by the participation of African delegations. A parade of over 3 hours with 85 boats on the River Seine and delegations of the 206 nations on board.

Paris was treated to an unforgettable ceremony thanks to the presence of 80 Heads of State and Government, including 12 African Heads of State to participate in the opening ceremony. At the invitation of the IOC President and the French President, the Presidents of Cameroon, Senegal, Rwanda, Djibouti, the Central African Republic and Gabon, among others, attended the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games Paris 2024 on 26 July. They were joined by ANOCA President Mustapha BERRAF, and Presidents of all 54 African NOCs.

As each African delegation paraded by, they were greeted with cheers, shouts of joy and loud applause. From the delegations of athletes from Algeria, Mali, Senegal, Ethiopia and Kenya, to those from Zimbabwe, Uganda, Rwanda, Congo and the DRC, not forgetting the delegations from Cameroon, Morocco, South Africa and Egypt, African culture, in all its diversity, originality and specificity, was celebrated and hailed on the banks of the Seine, through the shimmering outfits in the colours of each national flag, as each boat passed.

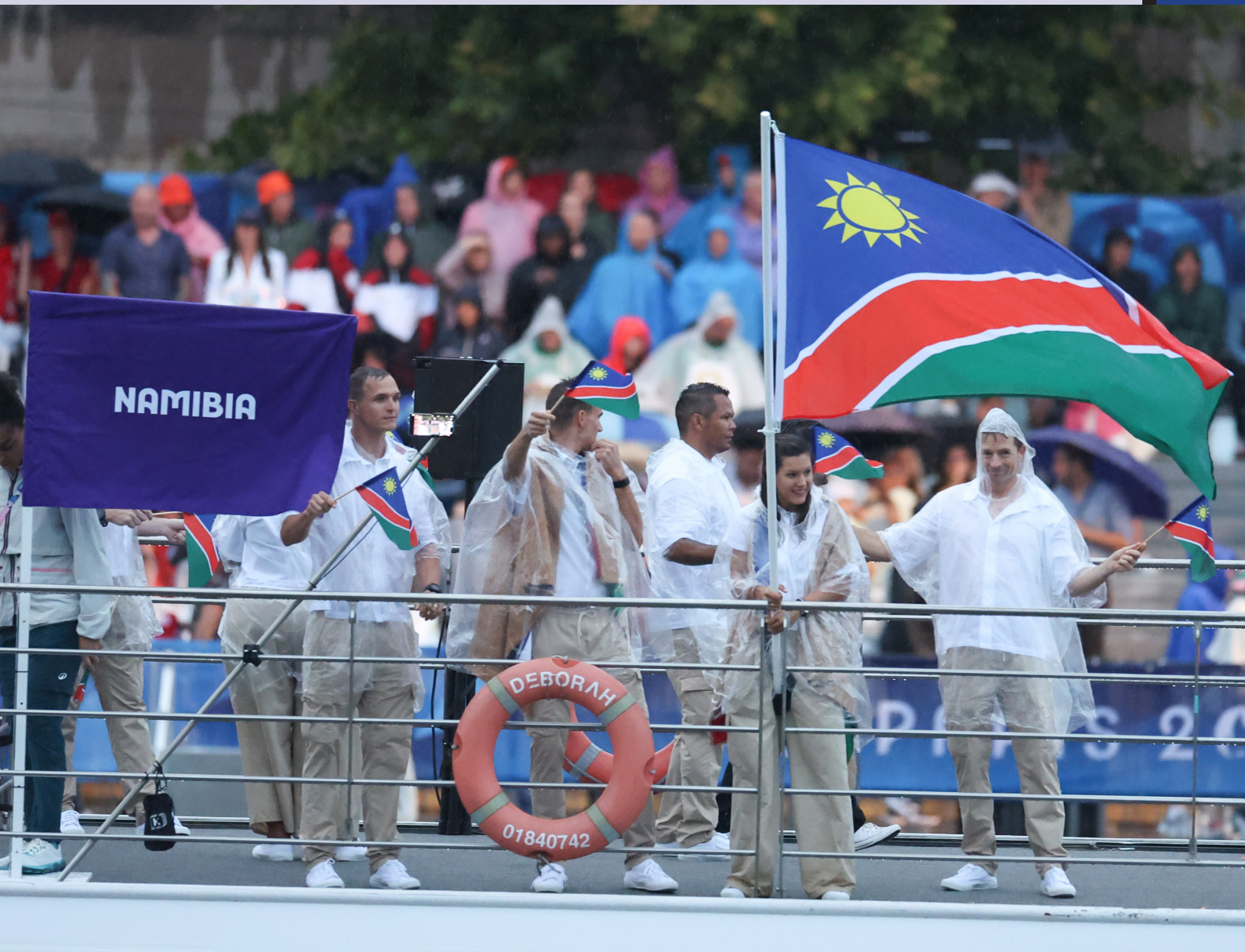
The delegation of Egyptian athletes, wearing white outfits topped with keffie in the colours of the national flag, and by far the largest on











the continent, received a standing ovation, as did Morocco and South Africa. An impressive procession of delegations, interrupted from time to time by choreographed sequences, fashion parades, musical comedies and dances performed by rapper-artists, while the mysterious athlete carrying the Olympic flame crossed the Seine at very high altitude, gliding on a rope linking two rooftops on either side of the river.

Zimbabwe with a small delegation, which was the last African delegation to take part in the parade, received a standing ovation for the original outfits worn by their

athletes, to close the parade along the River Seine. IOC President Thomas BACH then set the stage for the ceremony when he triumphantly declared: *‘finally, the moment is here: welcome to the Olympic Games Paris 2024... uniting all 206 NOCs and the Olympic Refugee Team, let us celebrate the joy of sport with the whole world.’*

President Emmanuel MACRON grasped the opportunity offered by Thomas BACH to declare the solemn opening of Paris 2024, the 33<sup>rd</sup> Olympiad of the modern era. Then came the Olympic oath dubbed: *“for a sport without doping, without cheating and without*



*any form of discrimination*”, a commitment to respect and ensure equality among athletes, was the oath taken by Méлина ROBERT-MICHON and Florent MANAUDOU, as well as two judges and two coaches.

The highlight of the ceremony was the Olympic flame taking centre stage for the ultimate lap and the finishing stretch, with relays between Zidane, Nadal, Tony PARKER, Karl LEWIS and Serena WILLIAMS, with Teddy RINER and Marie-José PEREC as the final flame bearers, who were tasked with lighting the Olympic

cauldron. To get the Paris 2024 Olympics festivities started with the participation of African athletes, ANOCA President Mustapha BERRAF estimated athletes medal chances at 50%.

Proud of the participation of African athletes, President BERRAF, talking on TV5 Monde Afrique after the Games’ opening ceremony said: *“I can tell you that our athletes, a little over 1,000, will represent Africa, although there are many African athletes in European and American teams that we are also proud of; we are proud of their origins.”*



**I can tell you that our athletes, a little over 1,000, will represent Africa, although there are many African athletes in European and American teams that we are also proud of; we are proud of their origins.**



By relocating the opening ceremony to the Seine on Friday evening, Thomas JOLLY, Artistic Director of Paris 2024, wanted to break with tradition and offer something that has never been seen before. And the gamble paid off. Despite the rain, which slightly marred the magic of various scenes, several moments will undoubtedly remain engraved in people's minds, and above all in the annals of this 33<sup>rd</sup> Olympiad.

# IOC President's speech at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games Opening Ceremony



The full speech delivered by IOC President Thomas BACH at the close of the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games Paris 2024 on 26 July 2024 to thank France and encourage athletes and the Olympic movement.

## **HELLO PARIS! HELLO FRANCE!**

Dear athletes;

The President of the French Republic, Mr Emmanuel Macron;

The Chair of the Paris 2024 Organising Committee, my fellow Olympian and dear friend, Tony ESTANGUET;

The Mayor of Paris, Mrs Anne HIDALGO;

Your Excellencies;

Dear Olympic Friends;

Finally, the moment is here: welcome to the Olympic Games Paris 2024!

My heartfelt thanks go to our gracious French hosts. Thank you for welcoming us in a spectacular way. The Olympic flame will make Paris and all of France shine even brighter.

We are deeply grateful to all our French friends. First and foremost to the President of the French Republic. All our gratitude also goes to the public authorities at all levels as well as the Paris 2024 Organising Committee, under the excellent leadership of my fellow Olympian, Tony ESTANGUET. You are bringing our Olympic Agenda reforms to life by making these Games wide open. All of us will experience Olympic Games that are more inclusive, more urban, younger and more sustainable- the first Olympic Games with full gender parity on the field of play.



**This is *why*, tonight, with my heart full of emotions, I invite the *whole world*: let us celebrate this joy of sport together with all the athletes. Have faith in the future. Together, let us celebrate the best of our shared humanity.**



Special thanks to the thousands of volunteers. Thank you for your commitment. Your smiles make us fall in love even more with Paris and France.

Our thanks also go to the whole team of the Organising Committee, of the public services



and to everyone who is contributing to make these Olympic Games an unforgettable experience.

What better place than Paris, to share this magic of the Olympic Games with the whole world. Paris, the birthplace of our founder, Pierre de Coubertin, to whom we owe everything. Paris, City of Light, where he created the modern Olympic Games. Paris, City of Love. Thank you, France, for this magical welcome.

Dear athletes, this is the pinnacle of your Olympic journey. You came to Paris as athletes. Now you are Olympians.

Stepping into the Olympic Village, it dawns on you like generations of Olympians before:

now I am part of something bigger than myself. Now we are part of an event that unites the world in peace.

In our Olympic world, there is no «*Global South*» or «*Global North*». We all respect the same rules and each other. In our Olympic world, we all belong.

As Olympians, we care for each other. We do not only respect each other, we live in solidarity with each other. All of you have experienced this and benefitted from our Olympic Solidarity on your long journey to finally becoming Olympians. This solidarity is made possible through the generous support of all our Media Rights Holders and TOP Partners. All together, we thank them





and everyone who supported you on your Olympic journey.

In a world torn apart by wars and conflicts, it is thanks to this solidarity that we can all come together tonight, uniting the athletes from the territories of all 206 National Olympic Committees and the IOC Refugee Olympic Team. Welcome to the best athletes of the world - welcome, Olympians! Some may say, we in the Olympic world, we are dreamers. But we are not the only ones.

And our dream is coming true tonight: a reality for everyone to see. Olympians from all around the globe, showing us what greatness we humans are capable of. So I invite everybody: dream with us. Like the

Olympic athletes, be inspired with the joy that only sport can give us. Let us celebrate this Olympic spirit of living life in peace, as the one and only humankind, united in all our diversity.

This is why, tonight, with my heart full of emotions, I invite the whole world: let us celebrate this joy of sport together with all the athletes. Have faith in the future. Together, let us celebrate the best of our shared humanity.

Long live the Olympic Games! Long live France!

Now I have the singular honour to invite the President of the French Republic, Mr Emmanuel Macron, to declare open the Games of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Olympiad Paris 2024.

**Mustapha Berraf**

**“We have set our sights  
on about 50 medals at  
Paris 2024”**





We are happy that, for the first time, Africa will be organising the Olympic Games

TV5 Monde: You are welcome to Journal Afrique's TV studio! You are the ANOCA President and you attended the OG opening ceremony. Perhaps the first question should be: What are your thoughts? What are your first impressions?

Mustapha BERRAF: Indeed, I am privileged to have been elected president by my peers. Honestly, I think there's nothing more to say. The event is exceptional, exciting. The theme for the opening ceremony (...) is a high-level one, with great probity. I think it's the first time we are participating in an opening ceremony with such vivid demonstrations, bearing all the cultural, sporting, and especially, human hallmarks.

Journalist: I said a while ago that there are more than 1,000 African athletes at the Games. In your opinion, which are the countries and, perhaps, disciplines that we must look out for?

Mustapha BERRAF: You know we are elated to have more than 1,000 athletes, as you said, that qualified for the OG because qualification in itself is a challenge that these athletes rose to and the number of qualified athletes has increased by approximately 20% compared with previous editions, and I also think that this should be credited to the NOCs and the perfect harmony they have with their governments. Athletes are motivated and determined, they have worked hard, and have had huge resources put at their disposal by their governments, the IOC's Olympic Solidarity, which has provided tremendous



support, as well as the mechanisms we put in place that helped to supply, equip and train all these talented young athletes, notably those ranked amongst the top 10 in the world rankings.

Journalist: In 2021 Mr BERRAF, at the last Olympiads in Tokyo, Africa won 37 medals. Do you think this year we can have more than that?

Mustapha BERRAF: Africa bagged 37 medals, 11 of them in gold. We are currently looking forward to more than a 20% increase. We have set our sights on about 50 medals at Paris 2024. As you know, Africans are also moved by their love for Paris, they are used to Paris, many of them are used to Paris and, by the way, they are currently fully integrated into some cities in France. There is also that

spiritual aspect that has made some cities in France welcome African athletes with much love and emotion like Kenyans who are currently in one of the cities of France and are very much integrated.

Journalist: On the organisation of major sports events, although Africa has never organised any Olympic Games, Senegal is gearing up for the 2026 Youth Olympic Games. Resource-wise, how do you live up to the challenge of organising such a sports gathering like the OG?

Mustapha BERRAF: I can confidently tell you that we are very happy that, for the first time, Africa will be organising the Olympic Games, even if they are the Youth Olympic Games that are a smaller version of the Senior Olympics, which as you know, are



a global event. I think Senegal is working relentlessly to ensure that people receive a warm welcome, that sport is spotlighted, and that the YOG in Senegal is sufficient proof that Africa has the infrastructural, human, and material potential to host the Olympic Games.

Journalist: Exactly. Speaking of potential, which African countries in your opinion have the potential to host the Olympic Games in future?

Mustapha BERRAF: As you know, South Africa has already organised the World Cup and North Africa through Morocco will be co-hosting the next World Cup with Spain. North African countries have all the potentials required and some West African countries also have huge potentials. You can see that Senegal has invested heavily

in infrastructure. I honestly think that things cannot be rushed and we can imagine that in the long run there will be candidates making their case. We currently have Egypt bidding for 2036 and 2040, and I believe Africa in its entirety will support this bid to ensure that the International Olympic City that they created and the new Cairo Olympic City welcome the Olympic Games. Quite frankly, however, I can tell you that our athletes, a little over 1,000, will represent Africa, although there are many African athletes in European and American teams that we are also proud of; we are proud of their origins.

Journalist: Thank you Mustapha BERRAF. You are the ANOCA President and have just been re-elected to this position. Thank you!

Mustapha BERRAF: Thank you!



**Paris 2024**

# Olympic Village welcomes African athletes

**O**lympic rings are usually the first attraction for all athletes across the world, and African athletes made no exception to the rule as they took pictures with the rings.

It was a crucial moment to get in shape prior to the start of various events. Chefs de mission of each African delegation welcomed athletes at the entrance to the Olympic Village, where the latter took up official residence and some of them proudly hoisted their national flags on their balconies.

This was the case for athletes from South Africa, Senegal, Cameroon, Algeria, Ethiopia, Kenya and Morocco, among others. They are among the 9,000 athletes who are staying in the Olympic Village located north of Paris, in Seine-Saint-Denis to be precise, on a 52-hectare complex that can host 14,500 athletes.

African athletes have been enjoying the comfort, tranquillity and safety of this venue, where they can prepare mentally and physically before the pressure of various



competitions mounts. All 54 African NOCs are well represented by their athletes.

Some African delegations organised coordination meetings to provide the best possible accommodation, transport and training conditions before the start of the Games.

Several African officials also visited the Olympic Village before the arrival of athletes to ensure excellent reception and accommodation conditions.

For instance, the new President of the Republic of Senegal, His Excellency Bassirou Diomaye Faye, visited the Olympic Village in company with the Minister of Sports and members of NOC Senegal (CNOSS) to meet Senegalese athletes. During this visit, he stated: “I can guarantee you that with this new government, we will pay attention to all competing athletes, because all sports are equal. Just remember one thing: all of

Senegal is very proud of you. You may not hear my cheers of encouragement, but like every other Senegalese, I will be your fervent supporter.”

The President of the Republic of Gabon, General Brice Clotaire Oligui Ngema, also visited the Olympic Village to galvanise Team Gabon. To the 5 athletes representing his country, he said: *“Push your limits and give Gabon medals, whatever the colour! You are our ambassadors. Since 30 June, our country has achieved a number of successes in various fields, and we expect the same success from you here. The most important thing for us is the medals. I know there aren’t many of you, but the Republic is counting on you.”*

The Minister for Youth and Sports and President of NOC Algeria, Abdelrahmane Hamad, also visited the Olympic Village to check out all the reception arrangements.



Also, the fact that all African delegations received a warm welcome from the communities living in Paris, volunteers and workers of different nationalities, including French nationals was a cause for satisfaction.

It should be noted that the arrival of athletes at the Olympic Village has increased the pressure and whetted their appetite for

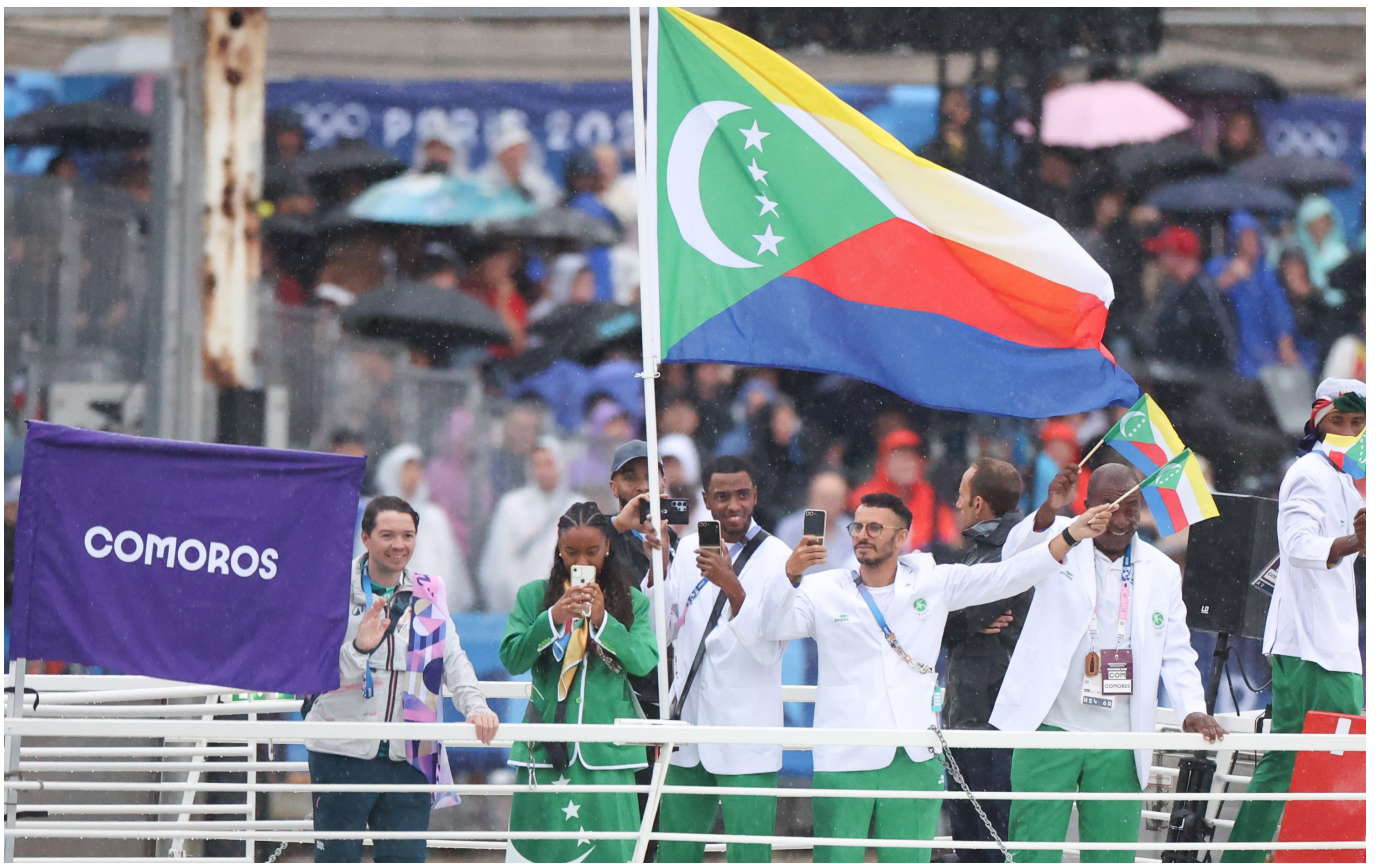
competition, just a few hours to the opening ceremony of the Paris 2024 Olympics, scheduled for Friday 26 July 2024. The ceremony will be attended by a dozen of African heads of state, alongside their French counterpart, Emmanuel Macron, IOC President Thomas Bach and ANOCA President Mustapha.





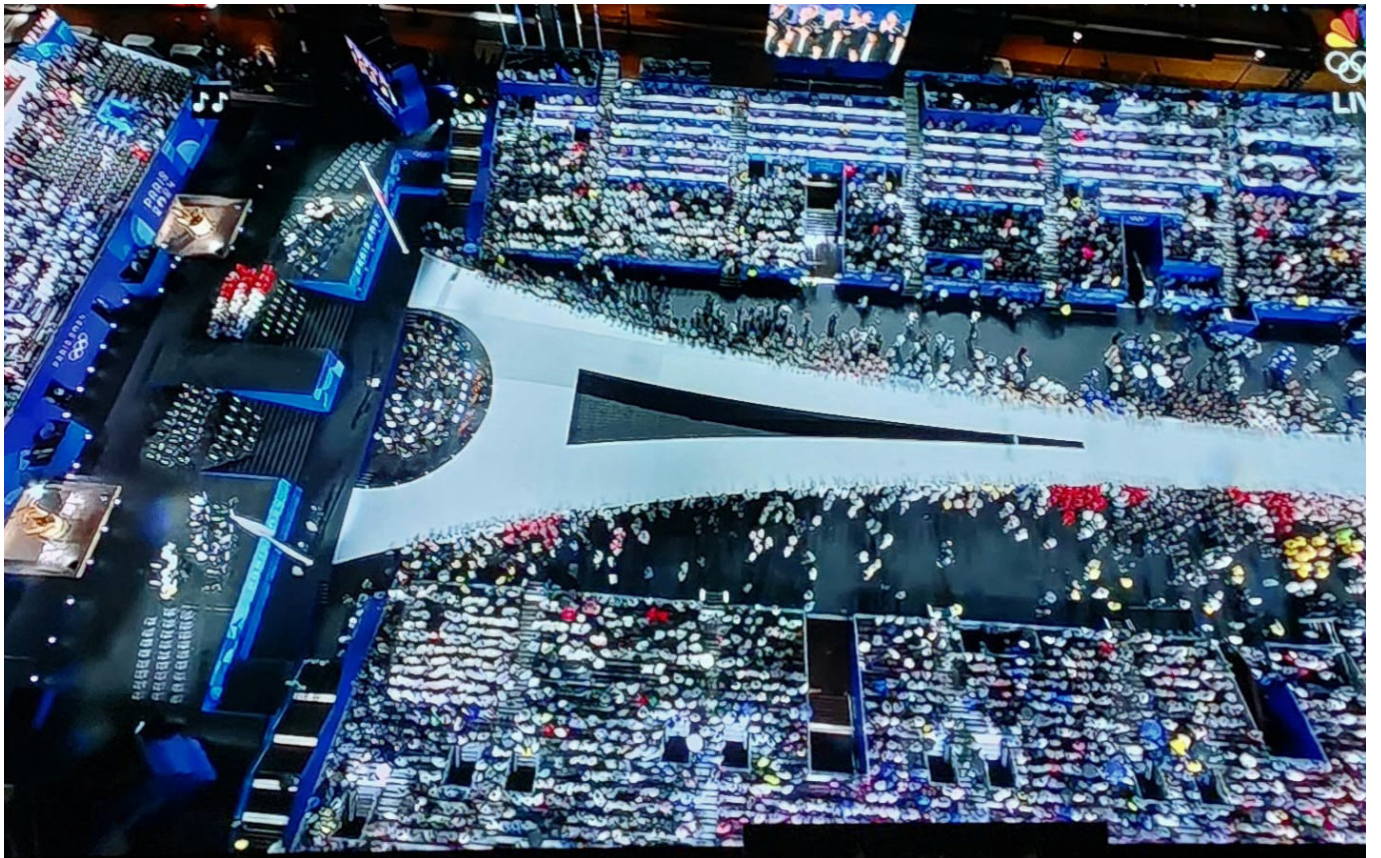






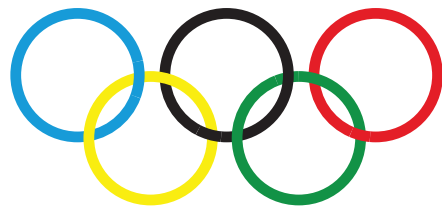








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