

Mauritanian chess player refuses to meet Israeli player

A Mauritanian

**refuses to play with an "Israeli"
in the World Chess Championship**



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Mauritanian chess player Abdel Rahim al-Talib Muhammad

Ramallah, August 19 (RHC)-- Israel has been snubbed for yet another time in sports as a Mauritanian chess player quit the Junior World Cup to avoid facing an Israeli opponent.

14-year-old Mauritanian chess player Abdel Rahim al-Talib Muhammad made the decision to pull out of the Junior World Cup because the draw set him up to confront a chess player from the Israeli regime, Middle East Monitor reported on Wednesday.

"I decided to retire because I refuse to play with a representative of a fictional country that in reality does not exist," said Muhammad, who is ranked 47th out of 215 players in the world.

In a statement, the Mauritanian National League welcomed Muhammad's decision and honored him upon his return. "We salute our dear son Abdel Rahman al-Talib Mohammed, this exceptional genius which honored our country and our people by declaring a boycott of the grim Zionist face," said Ghulam al-Hajj, president of the league.

The Israeli regime strives to "sportswash" its flagrant human rights violations and its appalling crimes against Palestinians through using its presence in international sports and cultural events.

On July 26, Sudanese judoka Mohamed Abdalrasool pulled out of the 2020 Summer Olympics in the Japanese capital city of Tokyo to avoid facing an Israeli opponent.

His decision came four days after Algerian judoka Fethi Nourine also withdrew from the same international sports event after the draw set him on course for a possible showdown against an Israeli opponent, citing his political support for the Palestinian cause as the reason behind his decision. After the 30-year-old athlete left the Olympic Games, the International Judo Federation (IJF) withdrew his Olympics accreditation, stating that his actions were "in total opposition to our philosophy."

It was not the first time that Nourine pulled out of the competition to avoid facing an Israeli opponent in solidarity with Palestinians. Back in 2019, he withdrew from the Judo World Championships in Tokyo when he was drawn to face an Israeli opponent.

At the 2016 Rio Olympics, Egyptian judoka Islam El Shahaby also quit the games, just hours after refusing to shake the hand of his victorious Israeli rival Or Sasson in the first round of the men's over-100kg competition.

Last April, the IJF imposed a four-year ban against the Islamic Republic of Iran Judo Federation (IRIJF) over Tehran's demands that Iranian athletes refuse to face Israeli opponents since the Islamic Republic strongly supports the Palestinian cause and does not recognize Israel.

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