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PRESS RELEASE

## Refugee Team takes the top spot in the first audio-assisted race in Europe

**After two months of training, the 11 refugees and migrants who make up «The Human Safety Net Refugee Team» lined up at the start of the «20 km of Geneva by Genève Aéroport» race. The team members ran the 5 km course with the help of an audio guide that provided them with directions. As they ran, they were supported by their coach Tadesse Abraham. Kidane Solomon took first place, Yohannes Haysh came in sixth and Awet Habtemariam was 13th.**

The «20 km of Geneva by Genève Aéroport» race was the first opportunity for members of «The Human Safety Net Refugee Team» to measure their performance against other competitors. The race with 2,844 runners was a completely new challenge: participants ran 5, 10 or 20 km with the help of an app with an audio guide. It was the first race of its kind in Europe.

### **Kidane Solomon wins over 5 km**

Eleven members of the Refugee Team took on the 5 km event on 22 November 2020. Kidane Solomon took first place with a time of 14 minutes and 19 seconds. Two of his team mates also took top spots in the race: Yohannes Haysh was placed first in his category (men aged 17-29), and sixth overall, with a time of 16 minutes and 41 seconds. Awet Habtemariam completed the race in 18 minutes, putting her in 13th place.

### **Tadesse Abraham runs with his team**

In mid-September, Generali Switzerland's «The Human Safety Net Switzerland Foundation» worked with Swiss marathon record holder Tadesse Abraham to form a running group. The group, comprising 34 refugees and migrants with a love of running, train together twice a week in Geneva. Abraham wants to motivate the members of the Refugee Team to do their best. To help them, he ran the «20 km of Geneva by Genève Aéroport» with them. Abraham came to Switzerland as a refugee from Eritrea in 2004. At the time, he experienced the enormous power of sport as an integrating force. "Coming to a new country as a refugee is a challenge. By running marathons, I quickly became familiar with Swiss culture and customs. Being part of a running team was incredibly helpful to me," says Abraham.

### **«Sport is everything. Sport is life»**

Kidane Solomon, a member of the Refugee Team, is originally from Eritrea and has lived in Switzerland since 2014. He began his amateur running career in 2017. This year, he completed a half marathon in Frankfurt, coming in third. And he did so with borrowed shoes because he could not afford a pair of his own. He has been a member of «The Human Safety Net Refugee Team» since September, receiving running gear and professional training. On 18 October, Solomon ran the Swiss national championships in Belp, where he recorded the second fastest time in the half marathon. After taking bronze and silver, he took gold at the «20 km of Geneva by Genève Aéroport». "For me, sport is everything. Sport is life. My dream is to earn a living as a professional runner. Thanks to the Refugee Team, I am able to train in a more targeted manner and get closer to achieving my dream," he says.

### **«Running gives me an incredible amount of energy»**

Another member of the Refugee Team is Yohannes Haysh, who came to Switzerland in 2015 when he was 16 years old. He learned to speak French with the help of Google. He is now completing his secondary studies in healthcare and intends to start a bachelor's degree in nursing next year. Haysh explains: "I love how much energy running gives me. After training, I am very happy and proud of myself. On the Refugee Team, I work with the coach to find out in which distance I am particularly strong. I would like to be a professional athlete like Tadesse Abraham some day." The «20 km of Geneva by Genève Aéroport» was the second race he has run. With sixth place in the overall standings, Haysh shows the potential he has.

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[Photos from the race](#) – password: **RefugeeTeam20**

Further information about the running group: [The Human Safety Net Refugee Team](#)

Further information about the foundation: [The Human Safety Net Switzerland](#)

Further information about the virtual run: [20 km of Geneva by Genève Airport](#)

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#### **ABOUT 20 KM OF GENEVA BY GENÈVE AÉROPORT**

**As the «20 km of Geneva by Genève Aéroport» race could not take place in its usual format this year, the organisers offered runners the opportunity to take part in an audio-guided competition. This would allow participants to observe the applicable health measures. Runners were able to run a distance of their choice in Geneva on any day between 1 and 22 November 2020. Three distances were available: 5 km by Generali, 10 km by Romande Energie and 20 km of Geneva by Genève Aéroport. The route covered more than 50% of the original course and wound through the city of Geneva, as well as the municipalities of Pregny-Chambésy, Bellevue and Genthod.**

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