

## **Afghanistan Team readies for competition at Invictus Games Toronto 2017**

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN – The CEO of the Invictus Games Toronto 2017 visited Kabul this week to meet with Afghanistan officials and potential competitors who may be selected to represent their country at the upcoming Invictus Games. Established by Prince Harry, the Invictus Games honour the unconquerable spirit of wounded, ill and injured service members and veterans through the rehabilitative power of sport.

“I was very impressed with the preparations for Team Afghanistan. These wounded warriors are fierce competitors – they are going to be a force to be reckoned with at the Games,” said Michael Burns, CEO of the Invictus Games Toronto 2017, following his three-day visit in Kabul.

Presented by Jaguar Land Rover, the third Invictus Games will be held in Toronto this year from September 23 to 30. It will build on the success of the London 2014 and Orlando 2016 Games. During his visit, Burns met with the President of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani, Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, the Canadian Ambassador to Afghanistan Kenneth Neufeld, and General John Nicholson, the commander of the NATO Resolute Support mission, to witness the progress to ready the Afghan team for the upcoming Games.

Afghanistan expects to field a team of at least seven injured military service members, supported by their families and friends throughout the journey. Burns also met with Afghan Minister of Defence Abdullah Habibi, the Afghan Chief of the Army Qadam Shah, and several ambassadors based in Kabul from countries participating in the Games.

It was Burns’ first visit to the country.

“Afghanistan is a country that is indelibly woven into the national fabric of Canadian military history,” said Burns. “Meeting Afghan soldiers who have become severely injured in battle, and learning more about the available rehabilitation services, was a powerful reminder of the strength of the Afghan people who have sacrificed so much to make Afghanistan a safer and more secure nation. There is a tremendous need, here and around the world, for programs like the Invictus Games that support the recovery of ill and injured service members.”

“The dedication and sacrifice of Canadian, Afghan, and International forces in service of a brighter future for Afghanistan lives on in the spirit of the Invictus Games,” said Ambassador Neufeld. “These warriors’ courage and strength, both during and after their service, is an inspiration to us all. We look forward to recognizing each of these servicemen and women this summer – In Kabul, Toronto, and around the world!”

**(More)**

“The Afghan National Defense and Security Forces are our valuable friends and partners,” said General John Nicholson. “The fact that Afghanistan is once again fielding a team at the Invictus Games for wounded warriors, reminds us of the sacrifice and dedication by the ANDSF. I wish all competitors at the Games the very best and thank them for their service.”

The Invictus Games Toronto 2017 will feature 550 competitors from 17 nations participating in 12 adaptive sports: archery, athletics, cycling, golf, the Jaguar and Land Rover Driving Challenge, powerlifting, indoor rowing, sitting volleyball, swimming, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair rugby and wheelchair tennis. The Games are funded by the Government of Canada, the Province of Ontario and the City of Toronto, as well as by Presenting Partner Jaguar Land Rover and other partners and sponsors.

For photos, please visit <https://flic.kr/s/aHskT9Zo2k>

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For more information:

Stephanie D’Lima  
Manager, Communications  
Invictus Games Toronto 2017 Organizing Committee  
[media@invictusgames2017.com](mailto:media@invictusgames2017.com)  
416-364-0001 ext. 61