



Taekwondo Champions File a Sex Trafficking Lawsuit against the United States Olympic Committee

The four champion athletes claim that the USOC engaged in sex trafficking by forcing the athletes to train and travel with known sexual predators.

DENVER, CO, UNITED STATES, May 11, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A Federal lawsuit filed in Denver, Colorado (case 1:18-cv-00981-CMA-MEH) claims that the USOC engaged in the sex trafficking of four young champion taekwondo female athletes by forcing them to train and travel with known predator coaches. The lawsuit was filed by Sharp Law and a group of law firms on behalf of former USA Taekwondo athletes Amber Means (Randall), Mandy Meloon, Heidi Gilbert, and Gabriella Joslin.

The first amended complaint states that starting in 1996-97 and continuing until 2018, the defendants, USOC and USA Taekwondo, knowingly participated in a venture to traffic the four young female athletes and numerous other unknown young female USA Taekwondo athletes around the globe to be used for the sexual benefit of defendants Steven and Jean Lopez, as well as unknown other USOC and USA TKD coaches and officials.

"Much like a pimp who traffics women for money, the USOC was trafficking its athletes to known sexual abusers for money and medals," said attorney Rex Sharp, Sharp Law.

According to the lawsuit, on April 3, 2018, the USOC banned Jean Lopez for life from coaching after the U.S. Center for SafeSport's Response & Resolution Office recommended that Jean Lopez be permanently banned as result of finding that he engaged in a decade-long pattern of sexual misconduct and sexual abuse of younger female athletes.

Jean Lopez was the USOC's taekwondo coach at the 2004, 2008, and 2012 Olympic Games. He was given credentials to attend the 2016 Rio Olympics by the USOC despite the fact that he was under investigation by USA Taekwondo's SafeSport program.

The lawsuit alleges that the USOC's acting-CEO Susanne Lyons had knowledge of the numerous complaints of rape and sexual assault made by U.S. athletes against the Lopez brothers, but refused to take any action.

"As a condition of representing the United States on the US Olympic team, the USOC forced athletes to participate in competitions, giving predator coaches like Jean Lopez and athletes like Steve Lopez an opportunity to sexually assault these young females," said attorney Jonathan Little. "The USOC knowingly trafficked these girls to obtain medals and money, time and again," added Little.

"We applaud Congress for enacting the recent Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and SafeSport Authorization Act. No longer can the USOC or its national governing bodies for various sports hide from their knowing and repeated violations of federal and state laws," said attorney Ryan C. Hudson.

The lawsuit cites numerous violations of federal law which criminalize sex trafficking, as well as state law claims. All athletes sexually abused in or after 2004 are asked to contact attorney Jonathan Little at 812-320-3367 or attorney Jessica Wegg at 317-509-3308.

The attorneys representing the TKD athletes include Daniel A. Lipman, Parker Lipman, LLP; Jonathan Little, Saeed and Little, LLP; Robert Allard, Corsiglia, McMahon & Allard, LLP; Rex A. Sharp, Ryan C. Hudson, and Larkin E. Walsh of Rex A. Sharp, P.A.; and Steve Estey, Estey Bomberger.

Edward J Vasquez
EJV Communications
408-420-6558
email us here

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