

Aliyyah Koloc shows fighting spirit in challenging first Dakar week

It has been an eventful first week for 20-year-old Aliyyah Koloc, driving her Red-Lined REVO T1+ for Buggyra ZM Racing.

MONACO, FRANCE, January 10, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Despite having a car with less power than her competitors in the Ultimate category, she finished the challenging Chronostage48 on Monday as the fastest woman in 27th position. She is currently 36th in the overall Ultimate standings after the Marathon stage yesterday which saw her being towed to the finish line for over 200 kilometers by her teammate Karel Posledni.

In her third Dakar and the second one in the highest car category, the Ultimate, Aliyyah Koloc has been battling with adversity nearly every day. Punctures, a broken window, a rear-axle fire, and a broken clutch due to which she spent all day yesterday being towed to the finish line through dust and rocks couldn't dampen her fighting spirit.

Nevertheless, the somewhat special second part of the Marathon stage yesterday tested Aliyyah and her navigator Sébastien Delaunay as well as Aliyyah's teammate Karel Posledni in his Tatra Phoenix truck to the limit. This is how Aliyyah lived the day: "It was pretty brutal. We started far behind because of the problems we had yesterday (note: a stone punctured a cuff on the semi-axle of her car, causing it to jam and catch fire), so we caught a lot of dust. But we were catching



a lot of trucks and cars in front of us. We had a pretty good pace and were in the Top 25.”

But then, somewhere after kilometer 80, they started to have some car issues that they couldn't place immediately. “We tried to fix the issue somehow and it worked for a few kilometers before the clutch went completely. We had to stop around kilometer 90 for quite a while,” Aliyyah explained.

Help in the form of a truck

The crew was lucky though as teammate Karel Posledni, driving a Tatra Phoenix truck, saw them and immediately towed them with his truck to neutralization. They then decided to tow Aliyyah and her navigator all the way to the finish so the crew wouldn't get a stage penalty. “Karel towed us for over 200 kilometers. It was a really long day for both of us but I am really grateful to him as otherwise I would have been stuck there. I am glad we are at the finish line,” Aliyyah said.



Martin Koloc, Buggyra's CEO and team principal, hails Aliyyah's resilience and strength in yesterday's stage. "It was an incredible and heroic performance. Aliyyah showed tremendous determination to finish this difficult stage. She made it look easy while being towed, but she had to endure all the dust and flying stones."

Good first week despite many car issues

Overall, Aliyyah is happy with her performance of the first week. “I think we have been doing pretty well. Our pace has improved since last year. In stage 4, we were in the top 20, even top 15 at some point, that was really cool. We had a lot of issues in the first week though, but we managed well. I think I am driving cleaner, especially yesterday (during stage 4) with no punctures. It could be better but it could be worse too. I am happy. We made it through the first week and hopefully we can fix our issues before we reach the dunes next week.”

Today is a rest day for all crews which is not only needed to restore physical and mental strength

but it also gives the team's mechanics some more time to hopefully fix the car for tomorrow's stage 6.

Summary of week 1 in Aliyyah's words

Prologue, January 3

"I am very happy that the Dakar has started. We've been here for a few days, and we finally got on the track today. The prologue was fast, we covered a lot of kilometers at top speed. Our car is not the fastest, but I'm looking forward to the first stage tomorrow,"

Stage result: 29th / Overall: 29th

Stage 1, January 4

"The track was very narrow in places. We didn't bump into anything, we were just brushing branches. Unfortunately, one of them damaged our window so much that we had to kick it out. But even without it I tried to keep a fast pace. Overall, not bad for the first day."

Stage result: 36th / Overall: 36th

Stage 2 - Chronostage 48 hours, January 5-6

"It was a very challenging two-day stage. Yesterday, we covered 600 kilometers. We had an issue with the car and stopped for half an hour but managed to reach the makeshift camp, where we worked on the car until late into the night. Today, it was very dusty throughout the whole stage. There's still a lot of work to be done on the car, but we're at the finish line, and that's the most important thing,"

Stage result: 27th / Overall: 26th

Stage 3, January 7

"The start was pretty rocky. We started at the back, so it was very dusty. Trucks and some cars came past us, and we got caught by a lot of buggies. Luckily, we didn't have any punctures. It was slower than yesterday, so I'm happy,"

Stage result: 28th / Overall: 28th

Stage 4, Marathon stage, part 1, January 8

"Aliyyah had a very good stage today. She drove at the level of the top 15 for a long time. Unfortunately, she lost 37 minutes with 150 kilometers to go when a stone punctured a cuff on the semi-axle of her car, causing it to jam and catch fire. Worse than the time loss is the fact that she will have to start from the back tomorrow," said Martin Koloc, Buggyra's CEO and team principal.

Stage result: 39th / Overall: 26th

Stage 5, Marathon stage, part 2, January 9

"The clutch went 'boom' and it was gone. It had already been giving us trouble during the second stage. We thought it was fixed, but no—it's completely gone now. For 200 kilometers, Karel towed us in the Tatra. It wasn't fun as it was very dusty. As a stage without any issues I would have really enjoyed it because it was a fast stage. But we couldn't go over 100 kilometers as otherwise I couldn't see anything. Karel had issues before us so he was a real trooper and I would like to thank him very much! I'm totally exhausted but happy that we made it to the finish. Tomorrow is a rest day, and I want to keep racing."

Stage result: 52nd / Overall: 36th

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