



Mr. Gianni Infantino
President
Fédération Internationale de Football Association
FIFA-Strasse 20
P.O. Box 8044
Zurich
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Dear Gianni Infantino

RE: REMEDY FOR ABUSE OF MIGRANT WORKERS' RIGHTS IN QATAR

With six months until the opening of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, hundreds of thousands of migrant workers have not received adequate remedy, including financial compensation, for serious labour abuses they suffered while building and servicing infrastructure essential for the preparation and delivery of the World Cup in Qatar. We therefore urge you, as the President of FIFA, to work with the Qatar government, trade unions, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and other actors to establish a comprehensive programme to ensure all labour abuses to which FIFA contributed are remedied, and to set aside appropriate financial resources.

We recognise that progress has been made in strengthening protections for workers through the Qatar government's labour reforms, as well as Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy initiatives. Qatar's legal reforms, for example, have the potential, if fully implemented, to improve protections for workers right across the country. However, for many workers these reforms came too late and have only been partially enforced, while the vast majority of workers essential to the preparation of the World Cup also fall outside the Supreme Committee's initiatives, meaning abuses persist. Critically, however, even if these reforms were now effectively implemented, this would not negate FIFA's responsibilities and Qatar's obligations to address and remedy past labour abuses.

FORESEEABLE RISKS

In 2010, when FIFA awarded Qatar the right to host the World Cup, it was well documented that labour abuses and exploitation were rife in the country. The rights of migrant workers, who formed about 95% of the country's workforce, were severely limited by the country's *kafala* sponsorship system and undermined by poor enforcement of labour laws, allowing unscrupulous employers to abuse migrant workers with impunity. While there has been progress in recent years, human rights abuses persist.

When FIFA awarded the tournament to Qatar, it knew or should have known the risks this would pose to migrant workers' rights given the country's poor human rights record and the ban on trade unions.

And yet it did so without placing on Qatar any conditions for the protection of labour rights. In awarding the 2022 World Cup without imposing any conditions to avoid foreseeable labour rights abuses and subsequently failing to take timely and effective preventive measures in this regard, FIFA contributed to the widespread abuse of migrant workers on World Cup-related projects that followed.

WIDESPREAD HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

The scale of human rights abuses linked to the World Cup is significant. Over the last 12 years, the vast majority of migrant workers in Qatar have had to “pay to work” in the country, with substantial illegal recruitment fees to secure their jobs, and many thousands have been subjected to widespread wage theft. Before 2020, no migrant worker could change jobs or leave the country without their employer’s permission, while human rights organizations and trade unions have documented numerous cases of excessive working hours, forced labour and other abuses. While some workers may have received some form of remedy, large numbers of abuses remain poorly addressed or not addressed at all.

Workers have been injured or even paid the ultimate price while employed in Qatar. On projects across Qatar – including those related to the World Cup and those not – Qatari authorities have failed to investigate the causes of deaths of thousands of migrant workers since 2010. A significant number of these deaths may be linked to working in the country’s extreme heat and humidity without adequate protection, and could have been prevented with effective health and safety measures.

RESPONSIBILITY TO REMEDY

Qatar is obligated under international human rights law to prevent such widespread human rights violations, and to ensure remedy for every abuse on its territory, whether linked to the World Cup or not. But FIFA too has its own clear human rights responsibilities under the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and as recognized by FIFA’s own policies, to remedy abuses to which it has contributed.

However, to date, neither FIFA nor Qatar have fulfilled their respective responsibilities and obligations in this regard.

FIFA’s responsibility covers not only workers directly employed on World Cup projects such as stadiums and training sites, but also the hundreds of thousands of workers employed to build and service a wider range of projects and infrastructure necessary for tournament preparation and delivery, including transport infrastructure and accommodations, the provision of security and cleaning, among others.

FIFA and Qatar should therefore work together with trade unions, the ILO and civil society to put in place a comprehensive and participatory programme to provide remedy for all abuses related to the 2022 World Cup.

This programme should learn from models established elsewhere to provide remedy for thousands of workers and families who lost loved ones. It should be established and governed in a participatory way following consultation with stakeholders including migrant workers, surviving family members, and trade unions; be easily accessible to workers and their families, many of whom will no longer be in Qatar; and be able to offer timely remedy for a wide range of unaddressed abuses since 2010.

While this process should seek to strengthen existing remedial mechanisms available in Qatar, such as those provided by the Ministry of Labour and Supreme Committee, it is also likely to require the development of additional systems capable of dealing with past and ongoing abuses on such a vast and transnational scale. For example, while the Labour Committees established in 2018 offer workers greater opportunities to seek remedy for unpaid wages, they only accept claims within a year of an abuse being committed.

The principle that abuses should not be repeated is fundamental to providing an adequate remedy.

FIFA should also support and contribute financially toward initiatives designed to support migrant workers, such as a Migrant Workers' Centre, as well as enhance and strictly implement its human rights criteria for future events and strengthen its human rights due diligence processes.

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

Qatar, FIFA, the Supreme Committee and other actors including employing companies all bear a responsibility, independent of each other, to contribute financially to a remediation programme.

Paying for the scale of remedy for families of those who have died, to compensate for unpaid wages, to reimburse illegal recruitment fees, and to support initiatives to protect workers' rights in the future will require a significant investment proportional to the abuses suffered.

FIFA should reserve an amount not less than the US\$440 million prize money offered to teams participating in the World Cup, to be invested in funds to support remediation. This would represent just a small percentage of FIFA's anticipated US\$6 billion revenues from the tournament and the US\$1.6 billion it holds in reserves. This amount reflects a likely "floor" for the scale of harm suffered and the need to invest in programmes to ensure that abuses are not repeated in the future. The final amount required for remedy will be determined by the scale of the need, the harms to be redressed and reparation measures to be offered, should be decided through a participatory process and subject to an independent evaluation.

The kick-off of the first World Cup to be held in the Middle East should be a moment of joy and pride for football lovers across the globe. But until all workers are compensated and harms remediated, the tournament cannot be truly celebrated. We the undersigned call on FIFA to urgently:

- Commit to establishing with Qatar a comprehensive remediation programme to address abuses suffered by migrant workers in the preparation and delivery of the 2022 World Cup that remain outstanding;
- Set aside no less than US\$440 million to fund remedy of such abuses, with the harms to be redressed and reparation measures to be offered being decided through a participatory process and subject to an independent evaluation; and
- Enhance and strictly implement its human rights criteria for future events and strengthen its human rights due diligence processes.

SIGNATORIES

[Amnesty International](#)

[Human Rights Watch](#)

[FairSquare](#)

[The Army of Survivors](#)

[Building and Wood Workers' International \(BWI\)](#)

[Business & Human Rights Resource Centre \(BHRRC\)](#)

[Equidem](#)

[Football Supporters Europe \(FSE\)](#)

[Independent Supporters Council | North America \(ISC\)](#)

[Migrant-Rights.org](#)