

PRESS RELEASE

FIFA PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES URGED TO COMMIT TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND TRANSPARENCY

(Berlin, 22 April 2015) - A coalition of leading NGOs and trade unions has written to the four FIFA presidential candidates urging them to commit to addressing human rights, labour rights and anti-corruption issues in future World Cups, if successful in their bid for the presidency.

In a questionnaire from the Sport and Rights Alliance (SRA), the candidates - Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein of Jordan, Sepp Blatter, Luis Figo, Michael van Praag - are asked whether in the first 100 days of their presidency they will address corruption, labour issues and other human rights concerns around the Russia 2018 and Qatar 2022 World Cups. The election of a new president takes place [on 29 May](#) in Zurich.

The questionnaire specifically asks the candidates if they will take measures to prevent human rights and labour abuses linked to construction for the Qatar 2022 World Cup. They are asked if they would use their position as president to exert pressure on the Qatari authorities to bring the country's labour laws into line with international standards and reform the *kafala* sponsorship system, which effectively ties migrant workers to their employer and prevents them from leaving the country.

FIFA has come under significant fire in the last few years over human rights abuses linked to the World Cup.

The run up to Brazil 2014 was marred by police violence against anti-World Cup protestors and forced evictions to make way for infrastructure for the event.

The Qatar 2022 World Cup has been linked to serious abuses of migrant workers' rights, including deaths at work, non-payment of wages, harsh and dangerous working conditions, shocking standards of accommodation and the *kafala* system.

Meanwhile, Russia's appalling record on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights, environmental protection and freedom of expression, exposed during the Sochi Winter Olympics last year, remains a real concern for the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

Furthermore, the awarding of the World Cups 2018 and 2022, as well as other decisions, have raised serious corruption allegations and further damaged FIFA's reputation. The SRA's questionnaire asks whether the candidates will continue with the much-needed FIFA reform process, including the implementation of term limits, independent directors, integrity checks and transparency regarding remuneration of officials and decisions of the Ethics Commission.

Eduard Nazarski, Director of Amnesty International Netherlands - a member of the SRA - said:

"Exploitation of migrant workers, police violence against protestors, government crackdowns on freedom of expression and corruption have become almost as synonymous with the World Cup as the actual football.

“The election of a new president gives FIFA a chance to turn over a new leaf, to say enough is enough and to use the power and influence of that position to push for positive change.

Ignacio Packer, Secretary General of Terre des Hommes, recalls the commitment of civil society organisations like the SRA members to take action:

“We will be closely following the FIFA presidential elections. We want to ensure that the next FIFA president – whoever it is – will pave the way for improvements. Thereby, we offer our support and expertise. Especially referring to children, the power of football offers many opportunities. But there are also risks which need to be mitigated and violations that must stop. FIFA is responsible for effects linked to its World Cups, both positive and negative. What a chance for FIFA and its future president to ‘make the world a better place’.”

The SRA is calling on the next FIFA president to urgently introduce measures to ensure the World Cup is always organised in a way that respects human rights, the environment and anti-corruption requirements at all stages of the process - from bidding, through to the development and delivery phase to final reporting.

The questionnaire is from SRA members Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the International Trade Union Confederation, Terre des Hommes and Transparency International Germany.

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The “Children Win” Campaign sets out the changes we all need for Mega Sporting Events to be safe and fair for children. The campaign doesn’t speak for children — it amplifies their voices. We encourage leaders of the sport industry, business, media, and the broad public to meet the children we spoke to along the way on www.childrenwin.org. Let them tell you how Mega Sporting Events affected their lives.