

PRESS RELEASE

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A year to Rio 2016: what media coverage for human rights?

One year ahead of the 2016 Rio Olympic Games, Terre des hommes calls for an increase in media coverage and scrutiny on Mega Sporting Events.

Analysis of media coverage regarding human rights issues of the **Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics, Brazil 2014 World Cup** and **Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games** found:

- The **UK** rated the highest of 12 countries assessed for quantity of human rights coverage, followed by World Cup hosts Brazil, then the US and the Netherlands. This is despite Brazil's low ranking for press freedom.
- **Russia** came last in the ranking of human rights coverage with only 0.49% of the total, despite hosting the Sochi Winter Olympics in that year.
- In a breakdown of the types of issues covered, **police violence** and **sexual exploitation** were among the most frequent.
- While at its highest in the **two-five months before the events**, coverage of human rights issues during and after Mega Sporting Events peaks around the **day of the opening ceremonies** in all territories and dies out afterwards almost completely.
- Coverage of **FIFA corruption allegations** and a trend for developing countries to host Mega Sporting Events are thought to be behind an increase in coverage of human rights issues connected to them.

While public awareness of the impact of Mega Sporting Events on human rights is a recent phenomenon, it still varies a great deal between countries - and the press is missing an opportunity to scrutinise these events after they have taken place.

Those are the findings of a report by Karen Petry and Till Müller-Schoell of the **Institute of European Sport Development and Leisure Studies** in Cologne. They analysed cuttings from 24 different sources in **12 countries** (Brazil, France, Germany, India, Italy, the Netherlands, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, United States and United Kingdom) from 2014, the year of the Sochi Winter Olympics, Commonwealth Games and FIFA World Cup.

"It seems to be a general pattern that attention for human rights and children's rights issues increases and peaks directly before MSEs, drops during the events and vanishes afterwards. This trend may suggest more work needs to be done to ensure that coverage and scrutiny of these events continue in the months - and even years - after they take place," they said.

The analysis was conducted for the NGO **Terre des Hommes**, in connection with its Children Win campaign, which highlights the impact of Mega Sporting Events on children and calls on sports governing bodies to ensure that these events do not cause or exacerbate child rights violations in their local communities.

Coverage of issues such as child sexual exploitation or evictions was generally higher in those countries which enjoy greater press freedom, but there were some surprising results.

Despite hosting one of the events, **Russia's** coverage of human rights issues connected to Mega Sporting Events was the lowest, comprising only 0.49% of the total analysed. Russia features 148th in Reporters Without Borders' list of countries ranked by press freedom. However, **Brazil**, which is ranked 108th, also hosted a Mega Sporting Event, yet despite this low rating it was second only after the **UK** in its coverage of human rights issues, according to the analysts.

The **Netherlands** was the smallest country analysed, yet produced 10.40% of coverage of human rights issues connected with Mega Sporting Events, fourth in the list.

Human rights issues that have already been raised in relation to the FIFA World Cup 2018 in Russia and 2022 in Qatar show that the intertwining of Mega Sporting Events, politics and human rights is only set to continue.

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Terre des Hommes launched the Children Win campaign in February 2014 to ensure that leading sports bodies mitigate risks and enhance opportunities of Mega Sporting Events on children, both direct and indirect. Terre des Hommes has commissioned and collected – articles and videos – featuring views and opinions of children linked to Mega Sporting Events: FIFA World Cup™ 2010 in South Africa and FIFA World Cup™ 2014 and Olympic Rio 2016 in Brazil. We encourage leaders of the sport bodies, industry, business, media, and the broad public to meet these children on www.childrenwin.org.