



General Assembly

Distr.: General
28 August 2017

English only

Human Rights Council

Thirty-sixth session

11-29 September 2017

Agenda item 4

Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by the Ecumenical Alliance for Human Rights and Development (EAHRD), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[10 August 2017]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.17-14872(E)



* 1 7 1 4 8 7 2 *

Please recycle A small graphic of a recycling symbol, consisting of three chasing arrows forming a triangle.



Qatar 2022: World Cup or World Shame*

Overview

Since Qatar won the bid to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup, it has sparked international outrage that forced FIFA under the microscopic lens of the international legal community against critical issues on migrant workers' abuses; terrorism financing; and bribery and corruption claims, and Qatar's complete disregard for human rights values.

The Qatar 2022 World Cup launched massive construction projects which have attracted businesses and companies, as well as encouraged the demand for thousands of migrant workers that are undergoing daily abuses to complete the project and being denied basic rights and freedoms. Additionally, Qatar ratified universal anti-corruption laws, but has failed to adhere in accordance to these laws; revealed through investigations on FIFA and the scandalous activity that involved Qatari nationals bribing FIFA executive officials. Critics have argued that Qatar's long list of human and labour rights violations should preclude eligibility for hosting such a global event. Moreover, as a result of Qatar's support to terrorist activity, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Libya, Egypt and other's severed diplomatic ties.

This report highlights that the rewarding of the FIFA World Cup to Qatar is a direct contradiction to the preservation of human rights and one that is in breach of FIFA's human rights policy and code of ethics. What AFHR seeks to point out in this report, is that FIFA has a responsibility to protect and adhere to basic human rights and assist in preventing corruption, and hence, needs to consider the possibility of stripping Qatar from its World Cup host title and initiate a new bidding process. Furthermore, what image is FIFA portraying if it continues to host the final in Qatar, a country which is accused of supporting and financing extremism and terrorism?

Can the World Cup 2022 be free from human and labour rights violations?

The awarding of the 2022 World Cup has brought increased global prominence to Qatar, but also intensified scrutiny. Particular attention has been paid to the treatment of migrant workers, especially those who involved in the World Cup construction programme, and the potential to face serious exploitation and abuses, as well as denying their basic rights and freedoms. Critics argue that Qatar's long list of human and labour rights violations should preclude eligibility for hosting such a global event.

Despite the noticeable progress made by Qatar's government to improve domestic labour regulations and policies, migrant workers, who comprise a large majority of Qatar's population, continued to face exploitation and abuse. Many international and regional actors called for FIFA to pull the world cup 2022 out of Qatar. The Qatari government promised to improve conditions of migrant workers, but reforms to the labour policies and regulations have so far failed to make any difference.

AFHR stresses that there has been no improvement in living and working conditions of migrant workers in Qatar. AFHR also emphasizes that Qatar is under great pressure to revise its policies and regulations that are threatening the promotion and protection of basic human and labour rights of migrant workers, and should be aware that hosting such a prestigious sports tournament like the FIFA World Cup, needs not only to focus on its socio-economic development, but to the rights and needs of the migrant workers.

The perplexing question remains: While Qatar is ready to spend billions of Dollars on its socio economic infrastructure, including a new airport, roads, hotels and stadiums for the success of the World Cup 2022, why is there reluctance to improve the minimum standards of living and working conditions for migrant workers, who represent the majority of Qatar's population and are playing a vital role in Qatar's projects and future events?

Can the World Cup 2022 be free from corruption and bribery?

Corruption undermines democratic institutions, slows economic development and contributes to governmental instability and economic instability, which in turn affects human security and individuals living in Qatar. AFHR seeks to shed light to these criminal activities but also address the flaws in the international legal system. An immediate question arises here, and that is one of jurisdiction. While corruption had been reported through indictments to certain individuals involved in the Qatar bidding process, there exists no international judicial system appropriate for handling the FIFA scandal. Yet this issue is very much international in character and in fact the accused individuals are of various countries and nationalities. Therefore, AFHR believes that the international community must hold these individuals – along with Qatar and FIFA – accountable for the alleged illegal activities. In lieu of an appropriate and effective international judicial system – countries can only shed light to ensure FIFA recognizes the rules of fair play that it purports to enforce in its games.

This AFHR report aims to raise questions and concerns as to why the possible rebidding process of Qatar 2022 World Cup has been discontinued, and no further investigations are taking place into the corrupt practices held by individuals from that country; highlighting that Qatar has ratified universal anti-corruption laws, which it has failed to adhere to. The question that arises and what AFHR seeks to point out, is that FIFA has a responsibility to protect basic human rights and assist in preventing corruption, and hence, needs to consider the possibility of stripping Qatar from its World Cup host title and initiate a new bidding process. Furthermore, what image is FIFA portraying if it continues to negotiate and host the final in Qatar?

Can the World Cup 2022 in Qatar be free of extremism and terrorism?

The report brings to light the current situation that rests in the Gulf region as well as emphasize the greater risk FIFA is taking by allowing Qatar to continue with its plans to develop the infrastructure for the World Cup in its country; highlighting that terrorism and the financing of terrorists is a direct contradiction to the preservation of human rights and one that is in breach of FIFA's human rights policy and code of ethics.

On 5 June 2017, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Egypt and other countries severed diplomatic ties with Qatar as a result of Qatar's support to terrorist activity which is destabilizing the region. Despite the continued denial and rejection of such claims from the Qatari state, there is solid evidence that ties Qatar to many terrorist groups.

The contradictions are evident as Qatar signed international and regional agreements that stated there would be no support or harboring of individuals or organizations that threaten security of states. Qatar, as several evidence shows in this report, has not been in compliance and is therefore breaching agreements. How can one ensure the same contradictions will not be used with an agreement with FIFA to host the World Cup? In theory, Qatar continues to engage in human rights treaties, but in practice is executing other methods that abuse rights and challenge security.

Qatar is blatantly committing state sponsored terrorism; the government is providing supplies, training, and other forms of support to non-state terrorist organizations. One of the most valuable types of this support is the provision of safe haven or physical basing for the terrorists' organization. Qatar is considered the home of many internationally wanted terrorists. There have been reports and convincing proof that the Qatari state has provided support to various terrorist groups fighting the governments of neighboring Bahrain, UAE, Yemen as well as terrorist groups in Egypt including support to Al-Qaeda, and the Muslim Brotherhood.

Therefore, in light of Qatar's supporting and funding terrorist groups, Qatar could face UN Security Council sanctions in view of its failure to comply with the council's counter-terrorism resolutions. How can FIFA continue to support a country that is violating international laws? Are they willing to jeopardize the reputation of the international organization through this continued association?

AFHR believes that Qatar is serving as a source of further regional and international instability which needs to be controlled by the international community by enforcing measures that would make Qatar abstain from continuing sponsorship to terrorism. FIFA can help play a significant role in assisting with tackling this critical problem, but initiating a rebidding process for a different host country. Additionally, by taking these actions, FIFA will stay true to its commitment to adhering to global human rights, as well as aid in the fight against terrorism.

*The Arab Federation for Human Rights (Dr. Ahmed Thani Al Hamli), NGO without consultative status, also shares the views expressed in this statement.