

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 2, 2017

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

Dear Mr. Infantino:

As an organization with global reach, it is critical that FIFA lives up to its commitments to promote and protect internationally recognized human rights. Recent reports have raised serious concerns about the exploitation of North Korean workers on a World Cup stadium site in Russia. These reports only reinforce our profound disappointment in FIFA's original decision to award the World Cup to a country that so blatantly disregards international norms. We therefore request that you swiftly and transparently investigate this matter. Should such an investigation determine that the Russian government or Local Organizing Committee was complicit in subjecting North Korean workers to forced labor, we would strongly call upon FIFA to strip Russia of the privilege of hosting the 2018 World Cup.

The use of North Korean laborers at the Zenit Arena in St. Petersburg, a fact that your organization has confirmed, is extremely disturbing. Several international publications have reported that those workers faced appalling working conditions that almost certainly amount to forced labor. Those conditions may have included inhumane working hours and living conditions, constant surveillance by North Korean agents, threats to workers' families still living in North Korea, absence of freedom of movement, wage garnishment by the North Korean government, and other similar features. News reports further suggest that one North Korean worker has died working on a World Cup site in Russia, possibly due to overwork. Such working arrangements are completely inconsistent with FIFA's human rights policy and international law.


We agree with Human Rights Watch's recent recommendation that you conduct a thorough and transparent investigation into the participation of North Korean workers on the St. Petersburg stadium, including ascertaining the fate and current whereabouts of the workers. Furthermore, we request that FIFA consider banning all contractors, companies, and governments that are found to have used forced labor in connection with FIFA events. FIFA must make it clear to the Russian government and aspiring host countries that the use of forced labor is wholly unacceptable.

We also call on you to expel North Korea from FIFA. A government that is one of the world's foremost human rights violators should not be allowed to reap international legitimacy, and to

financially benefit, from the world's most popular sport. Moreover, as recent reports indicate, North Korea has abused its own athletes, possibly by sending them to prison camps.

As an organization with the capacity to affect the lives of billions of fans, athletes, and workers around the world, FIFA must live up to its commitments on human rights. Protecting workers and athletes from forced labor must be a key element of those commitments. If FIFA fails to take action against Russia and North Korea, it will be perceived as tolerating these countries' heinous practices. We strongly encourage you to undertake a thorough, impartial, and transparent review of the alleged human rights abuses that have occurred in Russia in connection with the 2018 World Cup and in North Korea's treatment of its World Cup athletes. Should those abuses prove true, FIFA should immediately consider moving the event to an alternate host and expelling North Korea. The world's premier sporting event must not be built on the backs of the world's most vulnerable people.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Cory Gardner
United States Senator



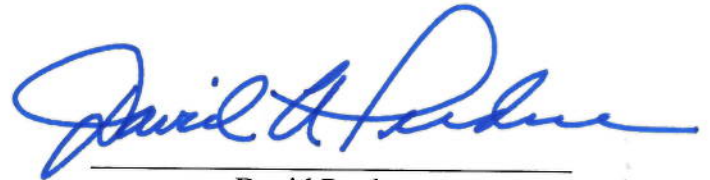
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