

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

FIFA Election: van Praag Offers Best Hope for Qatar's Workers and Ending FIFA Corruption

New Poll: Dutch, Portuguese and Swiss public back calls for FIFA to reverse decision to award Qatar 2022 World Cup if no reforms to labour rights

Brussels, 11 May 2015 (ITUC OnLine): Dutch football President Michael van Praag offers the best hope for the beleaguered migrant workforce preparing the 2022 World Cup, according to the ITUC<http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/fifa_en.pdf>. Van Praag, Prince Ali of Jordan and Portuguese football star Luis Figo have all nominated to challenge FIFA President Joseph Blatter for the election for FIFA President set for 29 May.

All three candidates standing against Blatter, who has run FIFA for the past 17 years, have spoken of the need to root out corruption and install human and workers' right standards at FIFA. Van Praag and the Dutch football federation he leads have made the most concrete statements on Qatar's notorious system of worker exploitation and the need for FIFA to act.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said "FIFA can save itself from the catastrophe of a World Cup built on modern slavery in Qatar, by electing a candidate who will act decisively to support human rights. Prince Ali has also spoken strongly on the issue, but only one candidate, Michael van Praag, has put human rights in his official election manifesto. On that basis Mr van Praag offers the best hope today that FIFA will finally put real pressure on Qatar to reform its medieval labour laws."

Prince Ali has, like van Praag, committed to reform of FIFA's governance and also to include labour and human rights provisions in future bids for major events, while Figo's commitments on human rights are less clear. It is understood that FIFA itself is working behind the scenes on human rights and labour standards proposals which, just three weeks before its Congress, are not yet public. Trade unions first raised concerns with FIFA about labour exploitation connected to the World Cup more than ten years ago.

An Ipsos MORI poll for the International Trade Union Confederation shows there is no clear majority for Qatar to keep the 2022 World Cup without workers' rights.

If the Government of Qatar does not change its laws, to help minimise accidents and the mortality rate of the construction workers working on the infrastructure for the 2022 Football World Cup, a majority of respondents questioned across three of four countries surveyed believe FIFA should reverse its decision to award the FIFA World Cup in 2022 to Qatar.

A new survey of more than 3800 adults in Jordan, Netherlands, Portugal and Switzerland, the home nations of the four FIFA presidential candidates showed strong support for FIFA reversing the decision to award Qatar the 2022 World Cup if Qatar does not change its labour laws.

The Ipsos MORI survey carried out between 13 April and 2 May 2015 found :

* Seven in ten respondents in Switzerland, home of FIFA and current President Sepp Blatter believe FIFA should reverse its decision to award the FIFA World Cup in 2022 to Qatar. The Swiss are most supportive of FIFA reversing the decision.

* Nearly two thirds (64%) of those questioned in the Netherlands, home to Michael van Praag, believe FIFA should reverse its decision to award the FIFA World Cup in 2022 to Qatar.

* More than half of respondents in Portugal, home to Luis Figo, believe FIFA should reverse its decision to award the FIFA World Cup in 2022 to Qatar.

* In Jordan, home to Prince Ali bin al-Hussein, opinion is divided with three in ten (27%) undecided, 49% believed that FIFA should not reverse its decision to award the FIFA World Cup in 2022 to Qatar while 24% thought it should be reversed.

Sharan Burrow, commenting on the poll findings, said “This poll shows there is still a great deal of public disquiet about a 2022 World Cup built on gross exploitation of migrant labour and the appalling death and injury toll. Even in Jordan, where we would expect strong public support for the first World Cup in the Arab world, only half the people say it should go ahead regardless of labour rights, and three in ten remain undecided. All four candidates for the FIFA Presidency need to recognise just how much FIFA is under the spotlight on labour rights.”

With the three candidates meeting today in Nyon, Switzerland, to decide if one or two will pull out of the contest to increase the chances of a decisive change at the FIFA Congress, pressure is mounting on 79 year-old incumbent Blatter and the FIFA hierarchy, which has failed to make ending modern slavery in Qatar a condition of hosting the World Cup. A series of corruption scandals centered on the decision to award hosting rights to Qatar has given impetus to all three external candidates, who have each given strong pledges to root out corruption and introduce transparency. FIFA lags well behind the International Olympic Committee which last year flagged a wave of changes under its Agenda 2020 reforms.

Notes to editors:

Question

“If the Government of Qatar does not change its laws, to help minimise accidents and the mortality rate of the construction workers working on the infrastructure for the 2002 Football World Cup, Do you think FIFA, should or should not reverse the decision to award Qatar the World Cup in 2022”

Jordan

Netherlands

Portugal

Switzerland

FIFA should reverse its decision to award the FIFA World Cup in 2022 to Qatar if Qatar does not change its laws

24%

64%

52%

70%

FIFA should not reverse its decision to award the FIFA World Cup in 2022 to Qatar if Qatar does not change its laws

49%

9%

14%

18%

Don't Know

27%

27%

34%

12%

Base: Jordan 800, Netherlands, 1000, Portugal 1020, Switzerland 1008

Fieldwork dates:

- Jordan: 13 April – 29 April 2015
- Netherlands: 17 April – 21 April 2015
- Portugal: 10 April – 21 April 2015
- Switzerland: 16 April – 02 May 2015
- All figures in percentages

Base:

- Jordan: 800 Adult men aged 16-44
- Netherlands: 1010 adults aged 16-70
- Portugal: 1020 adults aged 16-64
- Switzerland: 1008 adults aged 16+
- Data have been weighted to the known population profile
- Interviews conducted via mobile phones in Jordan, online in the Netherlands, via face to face interviews in Portugal and via telephone in Switzerland

Extract from Michael van Praag's FIFA election manifesto:

“Human rights

There should be more attention to human rights in FIFA's statutes. I stand for a world football association which applies the highest ethical and moral standards. This means that FIFA itself must set a good example, as well as ensuring that these standards play a key role in the awarding of large tournaments.”

See also: www.savefifa.org<<http://www.savefifa.org>>

For more information contact Gemma Swart +44 7944 99 07 63 gemma.swart@ituc-csi.org<<mailto:gemma.swart@ituc-csi.org>>