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ITUC OnLine

FIFA: Landmark Human Rights Report Sets the Agenda

Brussels, 14 April 2016 (ITUC OnLine): In a major breakthrough for human rights and sport, today's report on FIFA's human rights obligations, released by Professor John Ruggie, one of the world's foremost human rights experts, has set a clear agenda for FIFA to act and help restore its battered reputation. It also establishes a global requirement for all sports organisations, both for major events and for their ongoing operations including marketing and sponsorship.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said: "FIFA commissioned this report and now it needs to put the recommendations in place. Professor Ruggie has made it clear that the whole package of rights must be respected, without exception, and in every area of FIFA's operations including but not limited to huge events such as the men's World Cup."

The report states that "Internationally recognized human rights include rights to life and physical security, non-discrimination, rights to freedom of thought, expression and religion, freedom of assembly and of movement, rights to education and work, to family life and privacy, to food and water, freedoms from torture, slavery or forced labor, as well as rights to fair and decent working conditions, including freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively."

And "Where FIFA is unable to reduce severe human rights impacts by using its leverage, it should consider suspending or terminating the relationship."

"This report makes clear that FIFA must act decisively. Equally Qatar, which fails massively to meet the standards set out in the report, must ahead of the UN human rights and business forum which it is hosting next week, make a real commitment to comprehensive reform. The system of modern slavery for migrant workers, the absolute denial of freedom of association and collective bargaining rights, the poverty wages and the deep discrimination encountered by those who are delivering the huge 2022 infrastructure programme is completely out of step with the requirements that Professor Ruggie has highlighted. This report represents a major challenge for FIFA, and it also gives an opportunity for Qatar to comprehensively reform its medieval labour laws and thus retain the hosting rights to the 2022 World Cup," said Burrow.

The release of the report follows yet further revelations, by Amnesty International, of abusive labour practices at the heart of the World Cup (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/03/Abuse-of-World-Cup-workers-exposed/>) preparations, and new reports in the Guardian newspaper this week of maltreatment (<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/apr/13/balfour-beatty-interserve-accused-migrant-worker-labour-abuses-qatar>) of migrant construction workers in Qatar, as well as racial segregation (<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/apr/13/qatar-families-only-zones-entrench-segregation-of-migrant-workers>) in the capital, Doha.

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