

**German Confederation
of Trade Unions**

**Michael Sommer
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To the Presidents / General Secretaries of
FNPR, KTR

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Workers' rights in Qatar

Dear colleagues,

In 2011, FIFA made the premature decision to award the 2022 World Cup to Qatar. It is a matter of public record that this decision was taken on a manifestly dubious basis. Of even greater concern to the trade union movement, is the fact that Qatar systematically violates workers' rights and exploits working people. Until now, this has been completely ignored by FIFA.

A US\$ 100 billion infrastructure programme has been launched by Qatar for the 2022 World Cup. This means a massive increase in the number of migrant workers, mainly from South Asia, who are effectively excluded from Qatar's weak labour laws and thus have no protection. Reliable data from the International Trade Union Confederation have revealed the high death toll in Qatar's construction industry. The living conditions of the migrant workers are inhumane; makeshift sanitary facilities and overcrowded and dirty accommodation are the norm.

According to official figures from the government of Nepal, 44 Nepalese migrant workers died in Qatar between 4 June and 8 August this year. Workers are paying for the 2022 World Cup infrastructure with their lives. Of the 350,000 migrant workers from Nepal in Qatar, mainly working in construction, some 200 lose their lives every year from workplace accidents or from heart attacks due to the extremely hot conditions. Most of the workers work more than 12 hours per day, including during the hottest time in the middle of the day. Other causes of death include suicides and workers being struck by vehicles – these are all directly attributable to the working conditions. With the dramatic increase in the migrant workforce, we can expect at least 600 deaths per year.

Dear colleagues,

I believe it is our responsibility to increase the pressure on the FIFA Executive Committee to take urgent and effective action. Football is loved by countless numbers of people, but it cannot be that the World Cup is held in a country which treats its workers like slaves. I have made contact with the President of the German Football Federation, Wolfgang Niersbach, and asked him to support our initiative. He has committed himself to take the issue up with FIFA and to work with the trade union movement on it. He has publicly stated that „Qatar is a burden on the whole of football“.

My sincere request to you is that you make contact with your national football federation to inform them of the inhumane conditions in Qatar and to seek their engagement to actively support the withdrawal of the World Cup from Qatar unless the authorities there take immediate and comprehensive action to respect fundamental workers' rights and end the exploitation. Since a representative of your national football federation sits on the FIFA Executive Committee, the central decision-making authority, their support is crucial. I have attached a list of links to information sources on the situation for migrant workers in Qatar and the World Cup.

The FIFA Executive Committee will meet at the beginning of December in Porto Alegre, Brazil, so I would very much appreciate it if you could let me know the reaction of your national football federation by 25 November. This would assist us in further planning. This letter is being sent to all national trade union peak organisations in countries which have representation on the FIFA Executive Committee. If you or your colleagues have any questions, my colleague Barbara Susec, Head of DGB International Department, would be happy to assist. She can be contacted on +49 30 24060-219 or via email to barbara.susec@dgb.de. Feedback from your contacts with your national football federation should also be sent to Barbara.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you in anticipation of your support for this important initiative.

In solidarity,



Michael Sommer