

Motion to Stand Against the Violation of Human Rights and Environmental Impact in Qatar in Association with the Fifa World Cup 2022

Owner: Sofia Johnson, LGBT+ Officer

The SRC notes that:

1. "Sodomy" or same-sex sexual conduct between men remains an offence under the Penal Code in Qatar, punishable by up to seven years' imprisonment. Article 296 states that "leading, instigating or seducing a male in any way to commit sodomy or dissipation" and "inducing or seducing a male or a female in any way to commit illegal or immoral actions" is a crime in Qatar. [1]
2. Women continue to face discrimination in law and practice. Under the guardianship system, women remain tied to their male guardian, usually their father, brother, grandfather or uncle, or for married women, to their husband. [1]
3. Women continue to need their guardian's permission for key life decisions to marry, study abroad on government scholarships, work in many government jobs, travel abroad until certain ages, and receive some forms of reproductive healthcare. [1]
4. Family laws continue to discriminate against women by making it difficult for them to divorce. Divorced women remain unable to act as their children's guardian. [1]
5. In March, the government disputed the findings of a Human Rights Watch report on discrimination against women in Qatar, and pledged to investigate and prosecute anyone who had breached the law. By the end of the year, no such investigations had taken place. [1]
6. Authorities continue to curtail freedom of expression using abusive laws to stifle critical voices. [1]
7. Despite its stated commitment, the government failed to implement and enforce reforms for migrant workers, enabling abusive practices to resurface and reviving the worst elements of kafala (the sponsorship-based employment system). [1]
8. Migrant workers continue to face sometimes insurmountable bureaucratic barriers and requirements when seeking to change jobs without the permission of their employers, even though permission was no longer a legal requirement. [1]
9. Despite the introduction of a new minimum wage, as well as measures to monitor payment of wages, migrant workers continue to fall victim to wage theft by their employers without effective recourse to justice. [1]
10. Migrant workers continue to be barred from forming or joining trade unions. Instead, authorities introduced joint committees, an initiative led by employers to allow workers' representation. The initiative fell far short of the fundamental right of workers to form and join trade unions. [1]

11. Migrants from Bangladesh, India and Nepal working on the refurbishment of the showcase Khalifa Stadium and landscaping the surrounding gardens and sporting facilities known as the “Aspire Zone” are being exploited. Some are being subjected to forced labour. [2]
12. Many migrants seek work in Qatar to escape poverty and unemployment in countries such as Nepal, Bangladesh and India. But to get a job they have to pay high fees in the range of US\$500 to US\$4,300 to unscrupulous recruitment agents in their home country. Many are in debt, which makes them scared to leave their jobs when they get to Qatar. [2]
13. Workers often live in cramped, dirty and unsafe accommodation which are against Qatar’s own laws and Workers’ Welfare Standards. [2]
14. Some migrant workers for the World Cup were made false promises by recruiters in terms of salaries and the type of work on offer. [2]
15. Some employers don’t provide or renew residence permits, even though they are required to by Qatari law. These ID cards show that workers are allowed to live and work in Qatar. Without them, workers can be imprisoned or fined. Because of this some of the men working on Khalifa Stadium are scared of venturing beyond the work site or their workers’ camp. [2]
16. Some migrant workers have their passports confiscated from them by employers and are not able to leave the country without an ‘exit permit’ approved by their company – these requests are often ignored or denied. [2]
17. If workers complain about their conditions or seek help, they are often intimidated and threatened by their employers. [2]
18. Some workers who refuse to work because of their conditions are threatened with having their pay deducted, or handed over to the police for deportation without receiving the pay they are owed. [2]
19. Qatar’s World Cup is estimated to emit 6 million tonnes of CO2 despite claims to be ‘carbon-neutral’. [3]
20. Qatar has the world record for most CO2 emissions per person – 37 tonnes per capita in 2019. [3]
21. More than 6,500 migrant workers from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have died in Qatar since it won the right to host the World Cup 10 years ago. [4]
22. There have been 37 deaths among workers directly linked to construction of World Cup stadiums, of which 34 are classified as “non-work related” by the event’s organising committee. Experts have questioned the use of the term because in some cases it has

been used to describe deaths which have occurred on the job, including a number of workers who have collapsed and died on stadium construction sites. [4]

23. In May 2022, Amnesty and a coalition of organisations launched a campaign calling on Qatar and FIFA to establish a comprehensive remediation programme for hundreds of thousands of workers who faced abuses – to date, Gianni Infantino, the current president of FIFA, has provided no response to a joint letter sent by the coalition on the campaign's launch, while consistently avoiding the issue of compensation in public. [5]
24. The remediation proposal has gained widespread support, from more than a dozen football associations including those of England, Germany, France, Netherlands and the USA; World Cup sponsors Coca Cola, Adidas, Budweiser and McDonalds; and the Australian national team. However, while FIFA's senior leadership have acknowledged the importance of compensation, the footballing body and its President are yet to make any public commitment. A global poll commissioned by Amnesty across 15 countries revealed that 84% of likely World Cup viewers also favour the proposal. [5]
25. On 4 November, Gianni Infantino, the current president of FIFA, wrote a letter to all 32 nations competing at the 2022 World Cup, urging them to 'focus on the football' and to set aside human rights concerns. [5]

The SRC believes that:

1. The Students' Association stands for human rights and free speech.
2. Better understanding of the conditions in Qatar would allow students and staff to better support friends and colleagues impacted by the ongoing events.
3. The Students' Association promotes sustainable environmental practices.
4. The World Cup is the largest sporting event in the world and is a highly anticipated period for some students.
5. For some students the World Cup is one of the few times they will be able to see their country represented on such a large platform.
6. Football should be a sport that is inclusive and accessible for all.
7. It is impossible to 'focus on the football' and enjoy the World Cup without acknowledging the social climate in Qatar and the issues faced by the migrant workers who built the stadiums and surrounding areas for the event.

The SRC resolves:

1. That the Association should release a statement condemning the actions of the Qatari Government and calling on compensation for workers by FIFA and Qatar.
2. To promote, and encourage affiliated groups to promote, resources providing information on the situation in Qatar and ways to help.
3. That the Union should, at all world cup related events, promote fundraising for relevant charities, campaigns and resources.
4. That the Union should consider boycotting any game in which Qatar is a participant.

Seconders:

Lucy Brook, Director of Events and Services

Sam Gorman, Director of Student Development and Activities

Juan Pablo Rodriguez, President of the Students' Association

[1]

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/qatar/report-qatar/>

[2]

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2016/03/qatar-world-cup-of-shame/>

[3]

<https://www.greenmatters.com/big-impact/qatar-world-cup-environmental-impact>

[4]

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/feb/23/revealed-migrant-worker-deaths-qatar-fifa-world-cup-2022>

[5]

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/qatar-time-running-out-infantino-break-silence-migrant-workers-compensation>