

FIFA, QATAR, AND THE WORLD CUP: WHO BENEFITS? WHO PAYS THE PRICE?

This document relates to the UN SDGs #8 Decent Work and Economic Growth; #16 Peace and Justice. We love Football as a sport, but **what happens behind the scenes?** Faculty and students are urged by JHBC-PRME to understand use of migrant labor in connection with FIFA's World Cup games, 2022.



The GOOD...
THE ELEGANT,
THE ELITE,
AND THE SUPER
STARS...

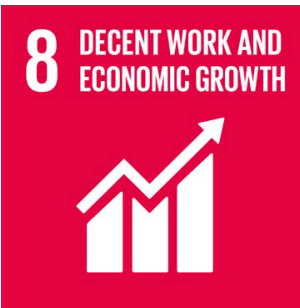


AND, THE UGLY...
TREATMENT OF MIGRANT CONSTRUCTION WORKERS



HUMAN RIGHTS: The state of human rights in Qatar is a concern for several non-governmental organizations—such as the U.N., Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch. The latter reported in 2012 that hundreds of thousands of mostly South Asian migrant workers in construction in Qatar risk serious exploitation and abuse, sometimes amounting to forced labor. Awareness grew internationally after Qatar's selection to stage the 2022 World Cup, and some reforms have since taken place, including two sweeping changes in 2020. Below see the UN's SDGS #8 and #16, *relating to slave labor*.

THE UN's SDGs¹ #s 8 and 16



TARGET 8.8 Protect labour² rights and promote safe and secure working environments of all workers, including migrant workers, particularly women migrants, and those in precarious employment

Related Thematic Areas (Source: United Nations)

- *Active Labour Market Policies*
- *Employment-rich Economic Growth*
- *Enterprise Development*
- *Equality*
- *Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining*
- *Future of Work*
- *Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination*
- *Health and Safety at the Workplace*
- *Labour Market Information Systems*
- *Labour Migration*
- *Labour Standards*
- *National Employment Policies*
- *Social Dialogue and Tripartism*
- *Working Conditions*

¹ Sustainable Development Goals signed at the Paris Accords on 2015

² English spelling



TARGET 16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and ensure equal access to justice for all

Related Thematic Areas (Source: United Nations)

- *Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining*
- *Future of Work*
- *Global Supply Chains*
- *Labour Standards*



TARGET 16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all its forms

Related Thematic Areas--Source: United Nations

- *Future of Work*
- *Labour Standards*

.....

QATAR, REALLY! WHY QATAR?

Qatar is a tiny Gulf nation with one of the world's largest reserves of petroleum and natural gas, and it is from these assets that its citizens enjoy a high-standard of living. (Image Left: grsia.gov.qa). However, it has almost no football history, let alone ever being qualified for a World Cup game. Having only one stadium in the country, many were puzzled as to why this particular venue was even considered for nomination, let alone selected as the host. This was a mystery to most pundits and aficionados of the sport. Of course, it wasn't a mystery at all. After all the country possessed one important quality that seems to have had considerable impact on its bid to host the tournament--an abundance of oil-rich corporate executives and financiers with very deep pockets.



Its approval for hosting the World Cup games ,2022, gave an enormous boost and shot in the arm to Qatar’s national pride. Now, the country began plans to make itself into the latest and most elaborate of extreme sports venues. It was decided to build not another stadium, or 2, or 3, but 14 highly elaborate football amphitheatres. Little Qatar, the size of Connecticut, is today saturated with elaborate sports structures, each grander than the last. The plan also included an assortment of new, high-end, hotels to support the many visitors that were expected to come. (Image: Encyclopedia Britannica).



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DE FOOTBALL (FIFA): In the weeks leading up to FIFA’s 2010 bidding process to determine the hosts of the 2018 and 2022 World Cups, widespread allegations of FIFA’s corruption began to emerge in the media. Along with the hoop-la, came an unmasking of the nation’s ethics and social responsibility violations. In November 2010, the BBC broadcasted the documentary *FIFA’s Dirty Secrets*, which detailed investigative reporting into corruptions, bribery, and other inequities within the bidding process. In 2014, Michael Garcia, a high-profile US attorney, who was experienced in cases of fraud, was hired by FIFA, to investigate the charges of wrongdoing. However, his report, *The Garcia Report*, was less than helpful to FIFA, who then criticized by FIFA. Mr. Garcia’s



itself, because his investigations of controversial 2018 and 2022 World Cup actions of FIFA revealed corruption at high management levels. (Image: Left: Football.com; Right; George Leekens)

Founded in 1904 to provide unity among national soccer associations, the Federation Internationale de Football Association boasts 209 members, and is arguably the most prestigious sports organization in the world. FIFA also has tremendous earning power. Most of these earnings come from organizing and marketing major international competitions, with the most popular being the Men's and Women's World Cup, each of which happens every four years. Between 2015-2018 largely on World Cup events, FIFA generated more than \$6.4 billion in revenue, per the organization's own annual financial report. The World Cup games are, on average, the most-watched sporting event in the world, drawing an audience of 3.57 billion viewers in 2018. However, the recent report from *The Guardian* has reignited longstanding criticisms of both the tournament and of FIFA. (Image Above Right: Kel Now).



SERIOUS LABOR ABUSE IN AN UNREGULATED MARKET

MIGRANT WORKERS: To complete their ambitious plans, Qatar needed many thousands of workers, but they were not in Qatar.



So, Qatar looked to Asia—Bangladesh, Nepal, Bahrain, and India mainly. To get them to come they were promised good wages and benefits—both were not forthcoming as the new arrivals immediately found out. The



working conditions were actually inhumane and deplorable. Amnesty International said that “Qatar has failed to explain the up to 70% of migrant worker deaths in past 10 years”) in connection with the World Cup preparations . (Images Left: MiddleEast Eye; Right: BBC) .

KAFALA: The *kafala system* is the “so-called” sponsorship program—i.e., a practice used to monitor sub-contracted migrant laborers. Kafala obliges all migrant workers to have a Qatari sponsor—generally the employer, who is responsible for their visa and legal status. These employers take away the workers’ passports when they set foot in Qatar, promising to keep the documents safe. Without their main identification records, workers become beholden to the employers.³ The Kafala has been connected to unfair labor practices--

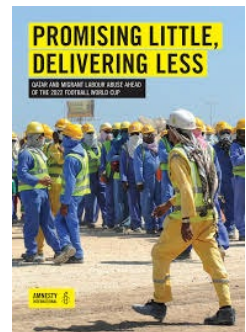


such as delayed or unpaid wages, forced labor, long hours in hot weather, slave quarters, and employer intimidation especially when they want to leave. (Image Left: The



workersrights.com; Left: Daily Record; Below: Right: Amnesty International).

The workers live in labor camps where their entries and exits are controlled, If employers get a hint of a grievance being filed, fast recuperations follow. If a complaint *is* actually filed, by the complainants, they are prevented from appearing for hearings or follow-up visits to redress their grievances. Complaints often result in joblessness, homelessness, and are inevitably caught up in irregular and entangled expensive and time-consuming criminal cases. Workers hesitate to take any step that might annoy their sponsors, who have the authority to pester and create stress for them. The intimidation is often blatant. The hopelessness of workers has caused any to commit suicide at a building site.



³ "The Middle East's migrant workers: Forget about rights". *The Economist*. 10 August 2013.

HARSH WEATHER CONDITIONS: Another concern has been the weather in the UAE with temperatures reaching as high as 50 °C (122 °F). Manual labor under such conditions leads to injuries. Two doctors from Qatar’s **Aspetar Sports Hospital** in Doha who gave an interview to *Qatar Today* magazine, (2010) asserted that the region’s climate would “affect performance levels from a health point of view”, that “recovery times between games would be longer” than in a temperate climate and that, on the field of play, “more mistakes would be made”. One of the doctors said that “total acclimation (to the Qatari climate) is impossible”.⁴ (Image Right: Khalajee Times).



THE FORGOTTEN:

- <https://youtu.be/gMh-vlQwrmU>
THE MEGA CITY SECRETLY BUILT BY SLAVES—Construction workers in the UAE
- <https://youtu.be/u6yoBcEXwmQ>
THE HIDDEN BRUTALITY OF QUATAR’S FIFA WORLD CUP PREPARATIONS

Deaths and slave labor: The disgrace of FIFA in Qatar

- <https://youtu.be/JjqNmBCj4il>

(Image Right: New York Times)



.....

Created for JHBC’s PRME Platform by Professor Breena E. Coates, for use by faculty and students in labor and Justice Studies

⁴ Montague, J. M. (2013). "Desert heat: World Cup hosts Qatar face scrutiny over 'slavery' accusations". *CNN*. Archived from the original on 20 December 2017.