

**FIFA, Russia, and Qatar: A Match Made in Hell**

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The Fédération Internationale de Football Association also known as FIFA was founded in 1904 as a way to recognize and unite national football associations around the world. With the start of the 1930 first World Cup match in Uruguay there has been a total of 20 World Cup tournaments played on a four year rotation in selected host countries. It was announced during the 2014 tournament in Brazil that the Russian Federation would be the host in 2018 and Qatar the host in 2022. The news of these two countries being the tournament hosts came as a shock to the world while also raising speculations about possible bribes with FIFA officials. Having just hosted the 2014 Winter Olympics in the city of Sochi, it is question of the economic affect the World Cup will have on Russia. While in Qatar the migrant worker death toll is reaching in the thousands and the tournament won't even be played for another six years. Due to financial and social corruption within the FIFA organization Russia and Qatar are facing various levels of negative political, social, and economic affects as future host countries of the World Cup.

For many years people have had a difficult and strenuous relationship with FIFA. FIFA means soccer, and soccer in most parts of the world means a lot. In an article from the Huffington Post listing the reasons why the United States should be excited for the 2014 World Cup, a writer stated, "The FIFA World Cup is the world's most widely viewed sports event... the 2010 South Africa event was broadcasted to 204 countries on 245 different channels." (Kruschewsky, [huffingtonpost.com](http://huffingtonpost.com)) This means that soccer as a sport and the World Cup as a sporting event have the potential as well as the power to unite the entire world. While it is seen on the outside as honor and a blessing to be host country for seemingly unified and well crafted sporting event, it does not come without repercussions. In order to prepare for hosting the 2014 World Cup Brazil spent \$15 billion while FIFA made \$4 billion in sales and planned to give back only \$4 million to the country. In a USA Today article FIFA Secretary General Jerome Valcke, on regards to the 2014 event, stated that it is the host country's, "Responsibility to limit the associated negative effects, while at the same time maximizing the huge positive impact it can have." (Wade, [usatoday.com](http://usatoday.com)) This means that the host country has to spend absurd amounts of money on an event that will have negative economic, social, and environmental impacts. Mean while FIFA benefits from earning money and having media coverage during the actual tournament. While this relationship is disguised as a mutually beneficial to all parties, only a small amount of FIFA officials really flourish. Although this relationship is corrupt it continues to be the norm for host countries.

Even though the world loves soccer it does not mean that they love FIFA and its identity. People have known for years that the FIFA organization is a downward spiral due largely to financial corruption and dishonesty. In one article the organization claims that it is, “An association of associations with a non-commercial, not for profit purpose that uses significant funds in the pursuit of its statutory objectives.” (York, [huffingtonpost.com](http://huffingtonpost.com)) These objectives include regulating, organizing, and developing the game of soccer and various competitions. While claiming to be a non profit organization FIFA still accumulates a vast amount of wealth which they say is used fairly and equally among all the countries involved and their associations, for the development of soccer. However, this wealth is not being shared equally amongst countries, but rather distributed secretly into the salaries of the organization’s top officials and used in bribery agreements. In an article by Business Insider it is said that FIFA’s financials, ‘Paid out \$39.7 million in salaries in 2014 to “key management personnel”,’ (Gaines, [businessinsider.com](http://businessinsider.com)) A member of this “key management personnel” include Sepp Blatter, a Swiss Football administrator who served as FIFA’s president for over 17 years. While FIFA did not release Blatter’s actual salary it was estimated to fall somewhere within a 6 to 16 million dollar range. On top of this outrageous price it was reported that Blatter was still receiving a small salary of \$2.5 million during the months preceding the election of the new FIFA President. An election that was only taking place because Blatter, along with other top officials, was banned from soccer and forced to resign following the uncover of a financial scandal that loss the organization \$122 million. ([theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com)) The 2015 scandal was linked to disloyal payment of officials and disloyal use of funds which led to FIFA loosing more money in unforeseen costs due to legal fees brought on by the scandal. Overall the FIFA organization is corrupted and contains many financial problems before it even enters a country that hosts the World Cup. Due to their selection Russia and Qatar are the next two nations to undergo this dilemma.

The Russian Federation is set to host the next World Cup in the summer of 2018. This means another multi-million or even billion dollar event is taking place in Russia just four years after they hosted the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics. Due to the secrecy of the Kremlin/government run country an accurate expenditure on the 2014 Olympics was actually released. But according to Paul Farhi, a reporter from the Washington Post said that western reporters and journalists estimated the costs to be around \$50 billion. (Farhi, [washingtonpost.com](http://washingtonpost.com)) While this is an astonishing price on its own, it becomes more of a concern

when compared to \$12 billion, which was the projected price at the time of the country's bid as host seven years prior. This reckless and dishonest amount of spending is a realistic fear that can carry over to the 2018 World Cup. The projected amount that the Russian government plans on spending for the 2018 event is \$15.5 billion, and there is a fear that the price could rise. In an article from Russia Behind the Headlines, writer Igor Rozin writes about Putin's plan for the event and his shared hope with Sepp Blatter in the success of the event. In the article a quote from Putin states, "Russia will carry out all the work in the established period, and on the highest qualitative level." (Rozin, [rbth.com](http://rbth.com)) **how do i end this paragraph i am struggling**

As well as the financial consequences of hosting the 2018 World Cup Russia will also receive serious social backlash from the rest of the world. Since his election as the President in 1999 Vladimir Putin has done everything in his power to turn the country into his Russia; Putin's Russia. During his 17 years as President and Prime Minister Putin has called several laws into action that have even caused concern for outside countries. Laws that according to the World Post are effective in, "Criminalizing criticism of Putin and his security force allies." (Jannuzi, [huffingtonpost.com](http://huffingtonpost.com)) Some of these laws include the jailing of prominent figures, the persecution of artists, the restricting of NGOs, expanding definition of treason, the criminalization of public actions of the LGBTI community, and intimidating human rights defenders. These laws along with many others have left parts of Russia in bouts of social unrest, as well as served as a problem for outside groups. Many people choose not to attend the Sochi Winter Olympics in 2014 because of these social inequalities. However, Putin, the Russian government, and Blatter (during his term) believe that this will not be the case for the World Cup and are overzealous to host it. On the FIFA official website there are pages with descriptions of the Country's host cities, their stadiums, and their history. There is even a link to a "Russia 2018" home page adorned in red and gold coloring, a by-day countdown till kick off, and articles and videos about Russians preparing with excitement for the event. ([welcome2018.com](http://welcome2018.com)) It's a frightening to imagine a country that is known for its political and social corruption to be hosting an event that is supposed to signify unity through the diverse love for soccer. Somewhere along the line deals were struck that allowed this pairing to be made, further adding to the dishonesty that sits at the root of this world event.

The horrors brought on and aided by FIFA do not stop in Russia, they carry all the way over to the Middle East in the 2022 host nation of Qatar. Qatar's problem with involvement in hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup is not financial but environmental and ethical. Qatar at a glance is a country with a population of just over two million, a GDP of around 93,000, and a dry hot climate with yearly summer temperatures reaching upwards of 114 degrees. The first concern that the world has had with the country hosting the soccer event is the climate. People are wondering how players are supposed to play over 90 minutes in such brutal conditions. An article from Accurate Weather said that FIFA officials have addressed this problem and have decided for the first time ever to move the event's dates to fall and winter months rather than being played during the summer. (Leberfinger, [accuweather.com](https://www.accuweather.com)) People within the soccer community responded in backlash to the idea that the event was being held in a country that had climate restorations that made it unfit to play in. Even the change of playing dates became a problem because it was made public that the FIFA officials are actively trying to fix a problem that they could have completely avoided by not selecting Qatar as the host nation.

The problems with selecting Qatar have continued to progress even further, as problems with the safety of labor workers becomes more public to the world. Headlines are published frequently with the rising death count of all the laborers in the country which includes those who work on the construction of the stadiums and their facilities. In a 2015 article from BBC news it was reported that 1,239 migrant workers from Nepal and India had died in a 3 year span after the announcement of the 2022 host city. (Stephenson, BBC News) Because Nepal and India make up about 60% of the migrant labor force in Qatar, their death toll gives an inaccurate yet enlightening view of how many people have died in such a small amount of time. Christopher Ingraham, a writer from the Washington Post wrote that, "If current trends continue, the ITUC estimates that 4,000 workers will die in Qatar by the time the World Cup is actually held in 2022." (Ingraham, The Washington Post) These reports by the International Trade Union Confederation are terrifying and are causing some serious backlash towards FIFA. People are horrified that FIFA would allow a country with poor and unjust labor laws and conditions to be chosen as a frontrunner for the World Cup. While the Qatari government has claimed that these deaths are not all connected to the production of the World Cup, supporters and spectators still uneasy with the idea that World Cup construction could have or eventually add to the inhumanity being caused. Overall the

growing laborer death count is just another consequence of the corruption that FIFA carries over to host countries.

FIFA has been a global entity for over a hundred years. Since its founding in 1904 it has been the organization's mission and goal to encourage the game of soccer and establish events that promote unity and cohesion on a global level. However, the means in which FIFA is trying to complete this mission has been corrupt, dishonest, and unlawful. Through the use of untrustworthy bribes and the reckless and unmonitored use of the organization's money FIFA has been labeled with financial corruption for years. A problem that they have well carried over into the countries that host their major events, including the World Cup. financial problems there is a slew of economic, political, social, environmental, and ethical problems that can be contributed to