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Onderwerp: Global dispute over Qatar 2022 World Cup needs immediate settlement to save lives - ITUC OnLine

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC) ITUC OnLine
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Global dispute over Qatar 2022 World Cup needs immediate settlement to save lives

FIFA 'courtesy visit' will not help workers workers' rights

Brussels, 4 October 2013 (ITUC OnLine): FIFA's offer of only a 'courtesy visit' to the Emir of Qatar is totally inadequate and fails to put in place any plan to stop more workers dying.

Sharan Burrow, General Secretary International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) said this is a global dispute over fundamental workers' rights and modern day slavery in Qatar which must be resolved immediately.

In the two years since the ITUC first outlined to FIFA the treatment of migrant workers in Qatar, an average of 600 workers have died there. The ITUC estimates 4000 workers will die in Qatar before the start of the World Cup in 2022 if no action is taken.

"Workers' from countries including India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and increasingly Africa are used as forced labour, denied the right to join a union, live in squalid living conditions and often are not paid the wages they are promised. Scores of healthy young men are dying. This web of deadly practices draws in international companies, the Government of Qatar and FIFA," said Sharan Burrow.

"Qatar's damage limitation exercise will not resolve the problem of forced labour in Qatar. The promise to recruit inspectors to police defective laws which cannot even be enforced under their kefala migration system will not stop workers dying in Qatar. Nor will engaging a law firm for an 'independent review' make any real difference."

"The settlement of this global dispute is dependent on actions by FIFA and the political will of the Qatari authorities, which are still absent. FIFA's offer is an insult to the bereaved families," added Sharan Burrow.

The legal and political solutions that will give workers their rights, and create the conditions for a safe World Cup in 2022 are available to the Government of Qatar.

- * End the kefala system so workers can change employers, and freely leave the country;
- * Pass national laws allowing freedom of association for migrant workers giving them the right to form and join trade unions and collectively bargain for fair wages and safe work;
- * Overhauling the grievance procedures for labour complaints;
- * Work with international recruitment companies to clean up the mass recruitment of migrant workers.

"FIFA has the power to make workers' rights a condition of Qatar hosting the 2022 World Cup. There is still time to rerun the vote to choose a venue which respect workers," said Sharan Burrow.

Qatar has previous form in promising 'independent reviews'. Following the Villaggio Mall fire tragedy in Doha Qatar on 28th May 2012, which killed 13 children and 6 adults in the Gympanzee nursery, the Qatar Authorities launched an independent inquiry to identify safety issues into public facilities and construction standards at the mall. Qatar World Cup Organising Committee head Hassan Al-Thawadi promised full disclosure from the inquiry to the bereaved families.

Martin Weekes, father of triplets who died in the Villagio mall fire said, "To this day that report has never been released to the families, their governments or even the Judge trying the case despite personal assurances from Hassan Al Thawadi that he and the Qatar 2022 Supreme Committee would get its release. We know that a promise from Qatar for an independent review is just empty words."

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For interviews with Sharan Burrow contact Gemma Swart gemma.swart@ituc-csi.org +32 479 06 41 63

For interviews with Martin Weekes, a former CEO of New Zealand's stadium in New Zealand's iconic Eden Park international sports stadium which hosted two Rugby World Cups, and father of triplets killed in the Villagio Mall fire Qatar. Martin worked for six years in Qatar in the property sector. martin.weekes@xtra.co.nz

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