



HUMAN RIGHTS GUIDE FOR REPORTERS

2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia



Russia: FIFA World Cup 2018

Human Rights Guide for Reporters

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Introduction

On December 2, 2010, the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) named Russia to host the 2018 World Cup, with Qatar picked as host for 2022. The decisions were controversial and drew widespread criticism for allegations that there had been corruption in the bidding process.

The World Cup will be the third major international sporting event that Russia has hosted in the past five years—several Russian cities hosted the FIFA Confederations Cup in summer 2017, and in 2014 Russia hosted the Winter Olympics in Sochi.

This reporters' guide looks beyond the state-of-the-art stadiums and shiny new hotels and summarizes the numerous human rights concerns surrounding Russia's preparations for the World Cup, the general situation for human rights in Russia, and FIFA's human rights commitments.

Human Rights Watch hopes that journalists and sports reporters covering the World Cup will consider extending their reporting to address labor rights concerns associated with Russia's preparations for the World Cup; rampant repression in Chechnya, where the republic's capital is hosting the Egypt national team's training camp; the larger ongoing human rights crackdown in Russia; and Russia's continued involvement in abusive military operations jointly with government forces in Syria. This reporters' guide will be a resource for this endeavor.

Labor Issues

In order to host the World Cup, Russia has built or renovated 10 stadiums and built infrastructure necessary to accommodate the influx of thousands of players, coaches, families, and journalists, as well as hundreds of thousands of fans. The government is improving infrastructure in several World Cup host cities, such as airports, hotels, roads, and transportation. To complete these massive construction projects, Russian construction firms have hired tens of thousands of laborers, many of whom are migrant workers from within Russia or from former Soviet republics.

In 2016 and 2017, Human Rights Watch researchers visited seven World Cup stadium sites and documented various forms of exploitation of construction workers. Our findings were published in a June 2017 report, *Red Card: Exploitation of Construction Workers on World Cup Sites in Russia*. This reporters' guide summarizes those findings. The types of abuses workers reported were similar to those documented by Human Rights Watch during Russia's preparations for the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi and are pervasive in Russia's construction industry. As of April 2018, the global trade union Building and Wood Workers' International reported 21 worker deaths on World Cup stadium sites.

Hundreds of workers at World Cup stadium sites have organized strikes protesting construction companies' abusive labor practices, but in many cases, strikers faced arrest and deportation by their employers for speaking out about the abuses. In documenting these and other issues, Human Rights Watch researchers consistently encountered an atmosphere of intimidation, suspicion, and secrecy from local authorities and stadium site security. Numerous workers declined to be interviewed or insisted on anonymity out of fear of retaliation from their employers.

Deteriorating Human Rights Situation in Russia

Since 2012, the broader human rights situation in Russia has dramatically deteriorated. The government unleashed an unrelenting human rights crackdown—the worst in Russia's contemporary history. This guide summarizes how the space for freedom of expression, association, and assembly has shrunk in Russia. It also provides background resources on other key rights concerns, including suppression of opposition campaign activities ahead of the 2018 presidential election; the crackdown on internet freedom; discrimination and violence against LGBT people; and lack of protections for victims of domestic violence.

Concerns in Chechnya

In February 2018, FIFA confirmed Chechnya's capital, Grozny, as the Team Base Camp for Egypt's national team, effectively extending FIFA operations to Chechnya. The Chechen government is responsible for grave human rights abuses. The head of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov, and his associates retaliate against even the mildest dissent through brutal repression. In January 2018, Chechen authorities arrested the Chechnya director of leading Russian human rights group Memorial on trumped up charges. It is clear that

the authorities are attempting to force Memorial, which is the only human rights organization that still maintains a presence in Chechnya, to shut down its operations in the region. Kadyrov is likely to take advantage of Grozny's selection as the location for Egypt's training camp to boost his credibility and prestige.¹ A passionate football fan, Kadyrov is also likely to be a VIP at matches.

FIFA's Human Rights Policy

FIFA's human rights policies, staffing, and approach to integrating human rights principles into its operations has changed in important ways since 2015. The football federation hired Harvard professor John Ruggie, who developed the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, to review its human rights policies and recommend reforms. The Guiding Principles explain how all businesses and commercial enterprises should take effective steps to avoid human rights problems and ensure remedies for abuses that occur in spite of those efforts. Ruggie's report, "For the Game. For the World" called for human rights to be central to all FIFA operations, including projects already under way such as the Russia World Cup. Since then, FIFA President Gianni Infantino has met with human rights groups, and FIFA added human rights responsibilities to Article 3 of its statutes. FIFA has also set up an independent Human Rights Advisory Board. In May 2017, FIFA announced the organization's first Human Rights Policy, applicable across its global operations.

In launching its Human Rights Policy, Infantino and FIFA Secretary General Fatma Samoura wrote:

"FIFA recognises its obligation to uphold the inherent dignity and equal rights of everyone affected by its activities. This responsibility is enshrined in article 3 of the FIFA Statutes, according to which: FIFA is committed to respecting all internationally recognised human rights and shall strive to promote the protection of these rights. This human rights policy specifies FIFA's statutory human rights commitment and outlines FIFA's approach to its implementation in accordance with the UN Guiding

¹ At a meeting with the Chechen government organizing committee in February 2018, Kadyrov said, "The Egypt national team's decision to choose Grozny for its base camp is important for the image of our republic. It is evidence of international recognition of the success of the Chechen Republic in developing and popularizing sport..." "Kadyrov: Chechnya will provide the best possible reception for Egypt's football team [Кадиров: Чечня обеспечит наилучший прием для сборной Египта по футболу]," TASS, February 12, 2018, <http://tass.ru/spb-news/4952222> (accessed April 30, 2018).

Principles on Business and Human Rights. Besides defining a standard of conduct for FIFA and all of its bodies and employees, this policy also reflects our expectations of a wide range of entities in their activities relating to FIFA, including all events organised by, or under the auspices of, FIFA.... We are committed to embedding this policy across our activities through ongoing due-diligence processes, which includes anchoring respect for human rights in the bidding and hosting of our events and throughout our relationships with third parties.”²

Despite the introduction of this Human Rights Policy, the human rights concerns that Human Rights Watch has raised with FIFA have been largely unaddressed on many occasions. FIFA has consistently praised the Russian government in public statements about preparations for the World Cup despite persistent human rights concerns.

² FIFA, *FIFA's Human Rights Policy*, May 2017, https://resources.fifa.com/mm/document/affederation/footballgovernance/02/89/33/12/fifashumanrightspolicy_neutral.pdf, p. 4.

MAP OF THE 2018 FIFA WORLD CUP HOST CITIES IN RUSSIA



I. Human Rights Abuses Linked to Preparations for the 2018 World Cup

Labor Rights

Between 2016 and 2017, Human Rights Watch documented the exploitation of workers employed on World Cup construction sites in six cities. Abuses included non-provision of contracts and other documentation required for legal employment; non-payment of wages; delays in payment of wages, including for up to five months; employer retaliation against workers who protested non-payment of wages; and employers requiring workers to work outdoors in temperatures as cold as minus 25 degrees Celsius without sufficient breaks to warm up.

Neither FIFA nor the Russian government has published official statistics on the total number of workers engaged in FIFA World Cup construction, but estimates run in the tens of thousands.

Exploitation and abuse of workers are pervasive problems in Russia's construction industry. In 2013, Human Rights Watch extensively documented exploitation of migrant workers during Russia's preparations for the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics. Human Rights Watch also documented abuses against migrant construction workers in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Ekaterinburg, and other cities in a 2009 report.³

In the run-up to the 2014 Winter Olympics, the International Olympic Committee and the Russian government took little action to investigate and remedy the widely documented labor abuses associated with Olympic construction sites. In December 2013, following numerous inspections, the Russian labor inspectorate found that companies engaged in Olympic construction owed workers a total of 277 million rubles (US\$8.34 million) in back wages. Human Rights Watch does not know whether workers were eventually paid their wages.⁴

³ Human Rights Watch, *"Are You Happy to Cheat Us?" Exploitation of Migrant Construction Workers in Russia*, February 10, 2009, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/02/10/are-you-happy-cheat-us/exploitation-migrant-construction-workers-russia>.

⁴ Paul Sonne, "Russia vows Olympic workers will get all unpaid wages," Wall Street Journal, January 10, 2014, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/russia-vows-olympic-workers-will-get-all-unpaid-wages-1389371875> (accessed April 16,

For more Human Rights Watch reporting on labor abuses in connection with the FIFA World Cup 2018, see:

Report, *Red Card: Exploitation of Migrant Workers on World Cup Sites in Russia*, June 14, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/06/14/red-card/exploitation-construction-workers-world-cup-sites-russia>

“Russia/FIFA: Workers Exploited on World Cup 2018 Stadiums,” June 14, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/06/14/russia/fifa-workers-exploited-world-cup-2018-stadiums>

“Time for FIFA to Act on Human Rights,” November 22, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/11/22/time-fifa-act-human-rights>

For more Human Rights Watch reporting on labor abuses in connection with the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, see:

Report, *Race to the Bottom: Exploitation of Migrant Workers Ahead of Russia’s 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi*, February 6, 2013, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2013/02/06/race-bottom/exploitation-migrant-workers-ahead-russias-2014-winter-olympic-games>

“Russia: Migrant Olympic Workers Cheated, Exploited,” February 6, 2014, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/02/06/russia-migrant-olympic-workers-cheated-exploited>

“Russia: IOC Acts on Sochi Abuses,” February 11, 2014, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/02/11/russia-ioc-acts-sochi-abuses>

“Dispatches: Too Little but Not Yet Too Late for Sochi’s Workers,” January 13, 2014, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/01/13/dispatches-too-little-not-yet-too-late-sochis-workers>

2018). International Olympic Committee correspondence with Human Rights Watch, February 9, 2014, https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/SOCHI%20-%20Reply%20from%20IOC%209Feb2014.pdf.

“Russia: Sochi Migrant Workers Targeted for Expulsion,” October 2, 2013, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/10/02/russia-sochi-migrant-workers-targeted-expulsion>

“Russia’s Olympian Abuses,” April 8, 2013, <https://www.hrw.org/video-photos/interactive/2013/04/08/russias-olympian-abuses>

Failure to Provide Employment Contracts and Pay Regular Wages

Throughout Human Rights Watch’s research on 2018 World Cup stadium sites, many Russian national and migrant workers told Human Rights Watch that their employers did not provide them with a written employment contract (*trudovoi dogovor*) or service contract (*grazhdansko-pravovoi dogovor*) when they began work, as required under Russian law. Some received a contract only after several months, while others never received them or received only oral agreements. Many workers also reported non-payment of wages or serious delays in wages.

For example, four Russian workers employed on the **Kaliningrad Stadium** site said they worked on the stadium for almost six months before receiving written employment contracts. The contracts they did receive were not consistent with Russian labor law, and the workers said that they received less than half of the wages promised to them.

Some workers employed on the **Rostov Arena** site told Human Rights Watch that their employer signed written contracts with them, gave them copies of the contract, and paid them regularly between 33,000 and 40,000 rubles (US\$615 and \$703) per month. However, their contracts listed an official payment of only 12,000 rubles (\$211) per month, and the remainder of the wages were paid in cash. In the event of a labor dispute, the employer would only be liable for the amount specified in the contract.

Similarly, several workers employed on the **Kaliningrad Stadium**, the **St. Petersburg Stadium**, and the **Luzhniki Stadium** in Moscow reported non-payment of wages, serious delays in wages for up to five months, or payments of wages in cash. Several workers also reported that employers promised a higher sum of wages than listed in employment contracts, with the difference paid in cash. In some cases,

employers paid only part of the promised sum, either only the official wages or less than the official wages.

Due to problems with contacts as described above, many workers who experienced non-payment of wages felt that their only option was to quit their jobs, either without their wages or with wages amounting to much less than employers had promised.

Not all workers interviewed by Human Rights Watch reported problems with wages. Among those who received their wages in a timely manner were workers with contracts and workers without contracts.

Russian law requires employers to pay workers a minimum wage at least twice per month. Withholding any portion of wages for over three months or withholding wages altogether for more than two months is a criminal offense punishable by fines and/or prison terms.

Workers without written employment contracts or with employment contracts that do not adhere to Russian law are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, as they have little recourse in the event of a dispute with their employer. Migrant workers working without a written employment contract are at risk of deportation for violations of migration law.

Working in Extreme Cold

Russian law requires employers with employees working in cold temperatures to do an assessment of conditions to establish what protections are required for workers to remain safe. The International Labor Organization (ILO) recommends that employers ensure that laborers working in colder temperatures are provided with adequate warm clothing, water, food, and rest periods for recovery. The organization notes that, in addition to the risk of hypothermia at temperatures of minus 12 degrees Celsius and below, working in cold temperatures without adequate protection can lead to reduced reaction times and cognition.⁵

⁵ International Labour Office, *Ambient factors in the workplace* (Geneva: ILO, 2001), http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---safework/documents/normativeinstrument/wcms_107729.pdf (accessed February 19, 2018).

Human Rights Watch talked with workers employed on the **Ekaterinburg Arena** site in January 2017, when temperatures were between minus 25 and minus 30 degrees Celsius. The two workers we interviewed at the stadium confirmed that employers require them to work when temperatures are well below freezing without sufficient breaks for them to warm themselves. The workers interviewed by Human Rights Watch stated that they only received one break indoors for lunch during a nine-hour work day.

Deaths and Serious Injuries

The international trade union Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI) and the Russian media have published numerous reports about deaths and serious injuries on World Cup sites, including in Volgograd and St. Petersburg. As of April 2018, BWI had recorded 21 fatal accidents.⁶ According to BWI, these fatalities since the beginning of construction and renovation of World Cup sites occurred at the following stadiums:

- St. Petersburg: 8 (including 3 prior to the announcement that this stadium would host World Cup games)
- Volgograd: 5
- Nizhnii Novgorod: 4
- Sochi: 2
- Rostov-on-Don: 1
- Saransk: 1

In October 2016, in response to worker deaths at the **St. Petersburg Stadium** in 2015 and 2016, BWI General Secretary Ambet Yuson stated, “We are increasingly concerned by the number of fatal accidents at the site and believe that these tragedies can be averted if safety and health conditions are strictly enforced.”⁷

For media reporting on worker deaths on World Cup sites, see:

Human Rights Watch, “Time for FIFA to Act on Human Rights,” November 22, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/11/22/time-fifa-act-human-rights>

⁶ Human Rights Watch correspondence with BWI, April 25, 2018.

⁷ “Another death at the 2018 World Cup Stadium in St-Petersburg,” BWI, undated, <https://www.bwint.org/cms/another-death-at-the-2018-world-cup-stadium-in-st-petersburg-450> (accessed April 26, 2018).

BWI, “Another death at the 2018 World Cup Stadium in St-Petersburg,” undated, <https://www.bwint.org/cms/another-death-at-the-2018-world-cup-stadium-in-st-petersburg-450>

Kuban.info, “On the Volgograd Stadium, a young welder fell 20 meters and died [На стройке ‘Волгоград-Арены’ с 20-метровой высоты упал и разбился молодой монтажник],” December 3, 2016, <http://kuban.info/proishestvia/5328-na-stroyke-volgograd-areny-s-20-metrovoy-vysoty-upal-i-razbilsya-molodoy-montazhnik.html>

Fedpress.ru, “Another Worker Was Seriously Injured on the Volgograd Stadium [Еще один рабочий получил травмы на стройке ‘Волгоград Арена’],” February 15, 2016, http://fedpress.ru/news/society/news_event/1455536246-eshche-odin-rabochii-poluchil-travmy-na-stroike-volgograd-areny

Kuban.info, “On the Volgograd Stadium, Metalworks collapsed together with workers [На стройке “Волгоград-Арены” металлоконструкции рухнули вместе с рабочими],” November 8, 2015, <http://kuban.info/proishestvia/3142-na-stroyke-volgograd-areny-metallokonstrukcii-ruhnuli-vmeste-s-rabochimi.html>

North Korean Workers on World Cup Stadium in St. Petersburg

In March 2017, *Josimar*, a Norwegian magazine about football, published a detailed article about North Korean workers engaged in construction work on the **St. Petersburg Stadium**.⁸ According to *The Guardian*, following a letter from four Scandinavian football associations about the allegations in the article, FIFA President Gianni Infantino responded with a letter in which he acknowledged the presence of workers from North Korea and poor working conditions on the site and claimed that FIFA and the Russian authorities required the stadium’s general contractor to rectify the concerns. FIFA has not responded to requests for information about what happened to the North Korean workers who were working to build the stadium.

⁸ Håvard Melnæs, “The Slaves of St. Petersburg,” *Josimar*, <http://www.iosimar.no/artikler/the-slaves-of-st-petersburg/3851/> (accessed February 20, 2018).

For more reporting of North Korean Workers at the St. Petersburg stadium site, see:

Josimar, “The Slaves of St. Petersburg,” March 2017,
<http://www.josimar.no/artikler/the-slaves-of-st-petersburg/3851/>

The Guardian, “‘Like prisoners of war’: North Korean labour behind Russia 2018 World Cup,” June 4, 2017,
<https://www.theguardian.com/football/2017/jun/04/like-prisoners-of-war-north-korean-labour-russia-world-cup-st-petersburg-stadium-zenit-arena>.

The Guardian, “World Cup 2018: Fifa admits workers have suffered human rights abuses,” May 25, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2017/may/25/fifa-world-cup-2018-workers-human-rights-abuses>.

Intimidation and Retaliation

Intimidation and Retaliation Against Workers

Some workers interviewed by Human Rights Watch reported threats or experienced retaliation for raising concerns about labor conditions or for actively participating in strikes. According to media reports, FIFA conducted an operational visit to the **Kaliningrad Stadium** in September 2015.⁹ In Kaliningrad, workers told Human Rights Watch that in September 2015, they tried to approach a delegation which included FIFA and Russian officials to raise concerns about wage delays, but security guards surrounded the delegation and refused to allow the workers to get near them to speak. According to the workers, some migrant workers working at the site were forced to remain in their dormitories near the site during the delegation’s visit.

Construction workers employed on stadium sites in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kaliningrad, and Rostov-on-Don reported reluctance to disclose labor concerns in interviews with Human Rights Watch out of fear of retaliation from their employers or dismissal. A worker employed on the **Kaliningrad Stadium** site told Human Rights Watch that he was dismissed after complaining about non-payment of wages.

⁹ Daniel Etchells, “FIFA delegation to tour venues for 2018 World Cup in Russia,” Inside the Games, February 21, 2017, <https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1047294/fifa-delegation-to-tour-venues-for-2018-world-cup-in-russia> (accessed February 20, 2018).

Russian media reported that authorities in Rostov-on-Don arrested and deported 30 migrant construction workers employed on the **Rostov Arena** site who had complained about wage delays without pay.¹⁰ Workers on the Rostov Arena had gone on strikes in May 2016 and April 2017 (see below).

Strikes and Other Protest Actions

According to Russian media reports and BWI, workers on several World Cup sites—including on the **Luzhniki Stadium** in Moscow, the **Nizhnii Novgorod Stadium**, the **Rostov Arena**, and the **Kaliningrad Stadium**—staged strikes to protest non-payment of wages and other labor violations.¹¹ At the **Rostov Arena** in Rostov-on-Don, several hundred workers staged strikes in May 2016 and again in April 2017 to protest five-month delays in wages or non-payment of wages.¹²

According to media reports, workers employed on a World Cup transportation infrastructure site and on the Nizhnii Novgorod Stadium site separately held strikes for non-payment of wages in August 2017.¹³

Approximately 50 workers employed on the “Strelka” metro station site, which provides a transportation link to the Nizhnii Novgorod Stadium, held strikes for alleged non-payment of wages. The workers submitted complaints to the prosecutor’s office and the labor

¹⁰ “Hundreds of Rostov Arena Builders Haven’t Been Paid in Months [Сотни строителей стадиона “Ростов-Арена” месяцами не получают зарплату],” Donday, ru, April 8, 2017, <http://donday.ru/sotni-stroiteley-stadiona-rostov-arena-mesyacami-ne-poluchayut-zarplatu.html> (accessed February 20, 2018). Human Rights Watch did not speak with any of the striking workers or their fellow workers at the site about the strikes.

¹¹ “Another Strike Over Unpaid Wages at 2018 World Cup Stadium in Russia,” BWI, June 11, 2016, <https://www.bwint.org/cms/priorities-10/union-11/sports-campaign-21/news-22/another-strike-over-unpaid-wages-at-2018-world-cup-stadium-in-russia-366> (accessed April 26, 2018). “Strike on the 2018 World Cup Stadium in Nizhnii Novgorod,” BWI, March 16, 2016, <https://www.bwint.org/cms/about-2/message-from-the-general-secretary-3/strike-on-the-2018-world-cup-stadium-in-nizhniy-novgorod-143> (accessed April 26, 2018). “Investigation of Wage Theft after Strike at World Cup Stadium in Russia,” BWI, July 18, 2016, <https://www.bwint.org/cms/priorities-10/union-11/sports-campaign-21/news-22/investigation-of-wage-theft-after-strike-at-world-cup-stadium-in-russia-390> (accessed April 26, 2018).

¹² “Rostov Arena Construction workers organized a strike [Строящие стадион “Ростов-Арена” рабочие устроили забастовку],” Lenta.Ru, April 13, 2017, <https://lenta.ru/news/2017/04/13/dolzhnystadik/> (accessed April 26, 2018).

¹³ “In Nizhnii Novgorod metro construction workers declared a strike [В Нижнем Новгороде строители метро объявили забастовку],” Regnum, August 28, 2017, <https://regnum.ru/news/economy/2314723.html> (accessed April 6, 2018). “Metro construction workers’ wages are again withheld in Nizhnii Novgorod [Строителям метро в Нижнем Новгороде снова задерживают зарплату],” *Regnum*, February 20, 2018, <https://regnum.ru/news/2382585.html> (accessed April 6, 2018). Human Rights Watch did not speak with any of the striking workers or their fellow workers at the site about the strikes.

inspectorate.¹⁴ Media reported that in September a criminal case was opened in connection with the workers' claims, and they were paid back wages in December.¹⁵

About 20 workers engaged on the Nizhnii Novgorod Stadium site also submitted complaints to the local prosecutor's office in August and held a strike for nonpayment of wages. The workers also claimed they had been issued invalid employment contracts. According to media reports, many of the striking workers were dismissed.¹⁶

For more reporting on workers' strikes on World Cup stadium sites, see:

Klops.ru, "The director, who fled after failing to pay wages to World Cup 2018 Kaliningrad Stadium workers, was arrested [Задержан директор, который сбежал, не выплатив зарплату строителям калининградского стадиона к ЧМ-2018]," April 7, 2017, <https://klops.ru/news/obschestvo/153343-zaderzhan-direktor-kotoryy-sbezhal-ne-vyplativ-zarplatu-stroitelyam-kaliningradskogo-stadiona-k-chm-2018>

Klops.ru, "In Kaliningrad, workers on the World Cup 2018 construction site organized a strike due to wage delays [В Калининграде на стройке стадиона к ЧМ-2018 рабочие устроили забастовку из-за задержки зарплаты]," July 28, 2016, <https://klops.ru/news/obschestvo/136310-v-kaliningrade-na-stroyke-stadiona-k-chm-2018-rabochie-ustroili-zabastovku-iz-za-zaderzhki-zarplaty>

BWI, "Investigation of Wage Theft after Strike at World Cup Stadium in Russia," July 18, 2016, <http://www.bwint.org/pdfs/Digest%20June-July.eng.1.pdf>

Klops.ru, "In Kaliningrad, the prosecutor's office demanded payments to be made to former employees of a construction company [В Калининграде прокуратура потребовала выплатить деньги бывшим сотрудникам строительной фирмы]," June 29, 2016, <https://klops.ru/news/obschestvo/134381-v-kaliningrade-prokuratura-potrebovala-vyplatit-dengi-byvshim-sotrudnikam-stroitelnoy-firmy>

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ "Nizhnii Novgorod Stadium: from strikes to the prosecutor [Стадион «Нижний Новгород»: от забастовок до прокуратуры], Regnum, August 8, 2017, <https://regnum.ru/news/economy/2308089.html> (accessed April 6, 2018).

BWI, “Another Strike Over Unpaid Wages at 2018 World Cup Stadium in Russia,” June 11, 2016, <http://www.bwint.org/default.asp?index=7180&Language=EN>

BWI, “Strike on the 2018 World Cup Stadium in Nizhnii Novgorod,” March 16, 2016, <http://www.bwint.org/default.asp?index=7022&Language=EN>

FIFA’s Labor Monitoring Ahead of the 2018 World Cup

In July 2015, FIFA and the Russian Local Organizing Committee (LOC) announced a “Sustainability Strategy for the 2018 FIFA World Cup.” Regarding the strategy, LOC President Alexey Sorokin stated, “[W]e will do our utmost to leave an unprecedented legacy of sustainability as well as social and human development.” Among the key issues identified in the strategy is “promot[ing] decent working conditions for FWC [FIFA World Cup] stadium construction workers.”¹⁷

Although work on some World Cup stadiums had begun years earlier, in May 2016 FIFA announced that for the first time it was organizing a system to monitor labor conditions at stadiums being built or renovated for the 2018 World Cup. According to FIFA, the program involves two-day quarterly visits to each World Cup stadium by the Klinsky Institute of Labor Protection and Working Conditions, a Russia-based auditing organization, to examine work conditions, health and safety, and employer-provided housing with respect to Russian legislation and International Labor Organization (ILO) conventions.

According to FIFA, among the concerns identified during the first round of announced inspections were shortcomings in providing protective gear, complying with labor agreements, and regulating work hours. Monitoring experts prepared an internal report for each company with key findings and recommendations, and the program provided training for construction company managers in occupational safety.¹⁸

¹⁷ FIFA, *Sustainability Strategy* (Zurich: FIFA, 2015), http://resources.fifa.com/mm/document/tournament/competition/02/66/69/50/sustainabilitystrategyfor2018fifaworldcup_neutral.pdf (accessed February 19, 2018).

¹⁸ “First round of visits to Russia 2018 stadiums for monitoring working conditions completed,” FIFA.com, July 12, 2016, <http://www.fifa.com/worldcup/news/y=2016/m=7/news=first-round-of-visits-to-russia-2018-stadiums-for-monitoring-working-c-2811754.html> (accessed March 19, 2018).

FIFA indicated in a letter to Human Rights Watch that as of June 2017, inspectors had carried out 58 visits under its monitoring program and evaluated the working conditions of about 900 workers per monitoring visit per stadium. The letter also included some information about the methodology, frequency, and other technical aspects of its monitoring program, as well as two examples in which FIFA said it resolved specific issues.¹⁹ FIFA published information on the timing of its monitoring visits throughout 2016 and 2017, but at time of writing there was no publicly available information on the results and timing of FIFA monitoring visits since November 2017.²⁰

Concerns with FIFA's Monitoring System

Human Rights Watch conveyed to FIFA numerous shortcomings identified with its monitoring system, including:

- Monitoring appeared to be limited to stadium visits, with no readily available information to show that monitoring is being done on sites related to infrastructure being built in preparation for hosting the World Cup.
- The monitoring system methodology was based solely on announced visits, giving employers advance notice of upcoming inspections.
- Many workers interviewed by Human Rights Watch were reluctant to report labor concerns out of fear of retaliation.
- Security guards denied workers the opportunity to speak with FIFA officials during an official site visit to the Kaliningrad Stadium. Workers told Human Rights Watch that they were forced to remain in their dormitories near the site during the delegation's visit. The workers did not indicate who ordered those workers to remain there.
- No workers interviewed by Human Rights Watch had spoken to any inspectors or other monitors, nor had any knowledge of labor conditions monitoring having taken place on their work site.

¹⁹ FIFA correspondence with Human Rights Watch, June 8, 2017, https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/hrw_correspondence_with_fifa.pdf (accessed March 21, 2018).

²⁰ "Fact Sheet: Decent Work Monitoring System," FIFA.com, November 2017, https://resources.fifa.com/mm/document/afsocial/general/02/85/41/05/factsheet2018fwcdecentworkmonitoringsystem_dec2017_neutral.pdf (accessed April 16, 2018).

FIFA responded to Human Rights Watch’s 2017 report and acknowledged the existence of labor rights concerns in connection with World Cup construction projects in Russia but stated that Human Rights Watch’s findings did not correspond with FIFA’s own assessment.²¹

Without publicly available information on specific monitoring visits’ findings and how labor issues were addressed, it is difficult for Human Rights Watch to verify the effectiveness of FIFA’s monitoring system in remedying both individual and systematic labor rights issues.

Regarding the North Korean workers on the **St. Petersburg Stadium** site, FIFA told Human Rights Watch that according to its monitoring, as of December 2016 there were no North Korean workers on the site, and there was no evidence of North Korean workers on other sites. It is not clear where the workers previously employed on the stadium are and what specific remedies—if any—were taken by FIFA, the Russian government, or the contractor to address the allegations of abuse. FIFA did not provide any further details pursuant to our request for further information regarding the North Korean workers.

Freedom of Assembly

Presidential Decree No. 202

On May 10, 2017, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed Presidential Decree No. 202, which places restrictions on public assemblies unrelated to official Confederations Cup or World Cup events. The restrictions applied before, during, and after the Confederations Cup from June 1 to July 12, 2017 and will accordingly apply before, during, and after the World Cup from May 25 to July 25, 2018. During these time periods, public assemblies may only take place in World Cup host cities if Russia’s Federal Security Service and Ministry of Interior have officially approved the time, route, and number of participants through an application the organizers are required to file with the local authorities.

Human Rights Watch found that in June and July 2017, Russian authorities relied on this decree to detain at least 33 people who were peacefully assembling or peacefully

²¹ “FIFA statement on Human Rights Watch report on Russia,” FIFA.com, June 14, 2017, <http://www.fifa.com/sustainability/news/y=2017/m=6/news=fifa-statement-on-human-rights-watch-report-on-russia-2894986.html> (accessed March 21, 2018).

expressing their views individually. In none of these cases did the individuals detained use or threaten violence or pose security risks to events or people participating in or connected to the 2017 FIFA Confederations Cup. Several cases involved individuals detained for holding single-person pickets, even though Decree No. 202 does not place restrictions on single pickets.

Human Rights Watch believes decree No. 202 violates the rights to free expression and peaceful assembly guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, both of which Russia has ratified. Russia's constitution also protects these rights.

Human Rights Watch considers Decree No. 202 to be overly broad, placing a disproportionate and unjustified restriction on freedom of assembly and free expression. Based on the manner in which the authorities have invoked it in the run-up to, during, and following the Confederations Cup, Human Rights Watch is concerned about the further use of Decree No. 202 to restrict freedom of expression and assembly before, during, and after the World Cup.

FIFA has not responded to Human Rights Watch's letter detailing these concerns.

For more information on individuals detained and charged under Presidential Decree No. 202, please see:

Human Rights Watch letter to the president of FIFA, September 13, 2017,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/04/09/letter-president-federation-internationale-de-football-association-fifa>

II. Human Rights in Russia

The human rights situation in Russia is dire. Since 2012, the government has unleashed the worst human rights crackdown in Russia's contemporary history. The space for freedom of expression, association, and assembly has shrunk dramatically. Other key rights concerns include suppression of opposition campaign activities ahead of the 2018 presidential election; discrimination and violence against LGBT people; lack of protections against domestic violence; and brutal repression in Chechnya, including retaliation against even the mildest critics and vicious attacks on human rights defenders.

This section summarizes these key human rights concerns and provides links to more detailed Human Rights Watch publications that include recommendations to the Russian authorities.

Crackdown on Freedom of Expression

The FIFA World Cup is a major sporting event that attracts millions of fans, billions of at-home viewers, and thousands of journalists to report on the games.²² Fans, journalists, and online commentators will use various social media platforms and online outlets to report on and comment on the games.

Yet in Russia, online freedom of speech is becoming increasingly restricted. Since 2012, the Russian authorities have unjustifiably prosecuted dozens of people for criminal offenses on the basis of social media posts, online videos, and media commentary. Using broadly phrased legislation which criminalizes "extremism" and "incitement of hatred towards a social, religious or ethnic group," Russian authorities increasingly use these charges to silence perceived political opponents and quash free speech.

Since 2015, the Russian authorities have also passed a raft of repressive laws regulating internet content and infrastructure. These laws provide the Russian government with a broad range of tools to restrict access to information, carry out unchecked surveillance,

²² "2014 FIFA World Cup™ reached 3.2 billion viewers, one billion watched final," FIFA.com, December 16, 2015, <http://www.fifa.com/worldcup/news/v=2015/m=12/news=2014-fifa-world-cuptm-reached-3-2-billion-viewers-one-billion-watched--2745519.html>, <http://www.fifa.com/worldcup/news/v=2014/m=9/news=2014-fifa-world-cup-braziltm-in-numbers-2443025.html> (accessed March 7, 2018).

and censor information the government designates as “extremist,” out of line with “traditional values,” or otherwise harmful to the public. These restrictive laws also shrink the space for public debate, especially on issues the authorities view as divisive or sensitive, such as the armed conflict in Ukraine, Russia’s role in the war in Syria, the rights of LGBT people, and public protests or other political and civic activism.

Other laws aim to undermine the privacy and security of internet users by regulating data storage, unjustifiably restricting users’ access to information, and ensuring that a wealth of data, including confidential user information and the content of communications, could be made available to authorities, often without any judicial oversight.

Authorities have repeatedly threatened to block Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter if they fail to comply with these laws. In 2016, authorities blocked LinkedIn for noncompliance with the data storage law, which prohibits storing personal data on Russian citizens on servers located outside Russia.

In April 2018, Russian state media watchdog Roskomnadzor obtained a court ruling to block Telegram, a popular messaging service which has more than 10 million users in Russia and more than 200 million users worldwide. In the following days, Roskomnadzor ordered the blocking of almost 18 million Internet Protocol (IP) addresses owned by international internet companies that Telegram used to continue to operate in Russia. Search engines, map and traffic reporting services, and many other services legitimately operating in Russia have been affected.

A 2012 law forces domestic nongovernmental organizations that accept any amount of foreign funding and engage in very broadly defined “political activity” to register their “foreign agent” status with the Justice Ministry. The term “foreign agent” in Russia connotes “traitor,” “spy,” or public enemy. At time of writing, 76 groups—including leading Russian human rights organizations—were on the government’s registry of so-called “foreign agents.” At least 30 others chose to close rather than wear the label. A 2015 law enables the government to extrajudicially ban as “undesirable” any foreign or international organization. At time of writing 14 organizations were on the list of “undesirable” foreign organizations, most of them American.

For Human Rights Watch reporting on laws which restrict freedom of expression and association, see:

Report, *Online and On All Fronts: Russia's Assault on Freedom of Expression*, July 18, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/07/18/online-and-all-fronts/russias-assault-freedom-expression>

“Foreign Agents” laws:

“Russia: Reject ‘Foreign Agents’ Media Bill,” November 16, 2017,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/11/17/russia-reject-foreign-agents-media-bill>

“Russia: Government vs. Rights Groups,” September 8, 2017,
<https://www.hrw.org/russia-government-against-rights-groups-battle-chronicle>

“Undesirable organizations” law:

“Russia: Punished Over Hyperlinks,” November 30, 2017,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/11/30/russia-punished-over-hyperlinks>

“Russia: Independent Think Tank Faces Charges,” September 8, 2017,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/09/08/russia-independent-think-tank-faces-charges>

“Russia: Open Society Foundation Banned,” December 1, 2015,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/12/01/russia-open-society-foundation-banned>

“Russia: Stop Draft Law on ‘Undesirable’ Groups,” May 15, 2015,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/05/15/russia-stop-draft-law-undesirable-groups>

“Yarovaya law”:

“Briefing on Shrinking Space for Civil Society in Russia,” February 24, 2017,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/02/24/briefing-shrinking-space-civil-society-russia>

“Russia: ‘Big Brother’ Law Harms Security, Rights,” July 12, 2016,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/07/12/russia-big-brother-law-harms-security-rights>

“Draconian Law Rammed Through Russian Parliament,” June 23, 2016,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/06/23/draconian-law-rammed-through-russian-parliament>

VPN ban:

“Russia: New Legislation Attacks Internet Anonymity,” August 1, 2017,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/08/01/russia-new-legislation-attacks-internet-anonymity>

Internet freedom:

“Russia: Assault on Internet Freedom, Cybersecurity,” April 30, 2018,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/04/30/russia-assault-internet-freedom-cybersecurity>

“Russia’s Internet War and its Collateral Damage,” April 24, 2018,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/04/24/russias-internet-war-and-its-collateral-damage>

“Telegram Loses Free Expression Battle to Russian Authorities,” April 13, 2018,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/04/13/telegram-loses-free-expression-battle-russian-authorities>

“Will Russia Block Twitter?” December 15, 2017,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/12/15/will-russia-block-twitter>

Crackdown on Freedom of Assembly

Millions of fans will gather to attend football matches and related events during the World Cup, yet Russian citizens who plan and attend peaceful gatherings to protest what they view as unjust actions by the government often face intimidation by the authorities. Within

the past year, many people have faced administrative charges, fines, and even prison sentences for their peaceful participation in public gatherings.

In March and June 2017 and January 2018, peaceful activists, including supporters of leading political opposition figure Alexei Navalny, held anti-corruption and “voters’ strike” protests. In many cities, the authorities refused to authorize protest organizers’ requests to hold public rallies, and local authorities harassed and intimidated protesters, including high school students and university students. University administrators directly or indirectly threatened students with expulsion for involvement.

During the protests, police arbitrarily detained hundreds of peaceful participants—including children—and courts variously issued fines and sentences of 10 to 15 days’ jail time for administrative violations. Human Rights Watch documented several cases of excessive use of police force in protests which took place in Moscow and St. Petersburg on June 12, 2017. Protesters who were detained reported being dragged to the ground, beaten with truncheons, kicked with booted feet, and punched. One protester in Moscow spent a week in a hospital with a concussion and other traumas after a police officer hit her.

For more Human Rights Watch reporting on freedom of assembly in Russia, see:

“‘You’ve Been Warned’ – Protesting in Russia,” February 2, 2018,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/02/02/youve-been-warned-protesting-russia>

“For Russia’s students, the price of protest can be high,” July 25, 2017,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/07/25/russias-students-price-protest-can-be-high>

“Russia: Peaceful Protesters Detained, Abused,” July 7, 2017,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/07/07/russia-peaceful-protesters-detained-abused>

“Witness: Beaten by Police in Moscow,” July 7, 2017,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/07/07/witness-beaten-police-moscow>

“Russia: Children, Students Targeted after Protests,” June 11, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/06/11/russia-children-students-targeted-after-protests>

“Nation-Wide Protests Over Corruption Take Place Across Russian Cities,” March 26, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/03/26/nation-wide-protests-over-corruption-take-place-across-russian-cities>

Human Rights Crisis in Chechnya

In February 2018, FIFA confirmed Chechnya’s capital, Grozny, as the Team Base Camp for Egypt’s national team, extending their operations to Chechnya.

For over a decade, with the Kremlin’s blessing, law enforcement and security officials under the leadership of the head of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov, have engaged in extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, and acts of torture. Human rights defenders have been threatened, beaten, and killed and have had their offices repeatedly torched. Local authorities brutally retaliate against people who publicly express even mild criticism of Kadyrov and government policies.

Chechen authorities have unleashed a campaign against Memorial Human Rights Center, the only remaining rights group on the ground in Chechnya. On January 9, Chechen police arrested Memorial’s Chechnya director, Oyub Titiev, on bogus marijuana possession charges. In the days and weeks that followed, unknown assailants set fire to Memorial property in neighboring Dagestan and Ingushetia, and employees received anonymous death threats via text messages and phone calls. There is no doubt that Chechen authorities are targeting Titiev to retaliate against his human rights work and to push Memorial out of Chechnya, leaving victims of abuses with no place to go. Titiev is now on remand pending trial and faces a maximum 10-year prison sentence if convicted.

While Titiev’s and Memorial’s work in Chechnya does not focus directly on FIFA-related activities, it is indispensable to the promotion and protection of human rights in the region. FIFA now has an opportunity to use its leverage with the Russian authorities to help protect Titiev and Memorial. Titiev’s continued prosecution and conviction—should a trial

go forward—and any forced closure of Memorial in Chechnya would be among the issues that would cast a shadow on the World Cup.

It is likely that Kadyrov will take advantage of Grozny being chosen as the location for a World Cup team training camp to boost his credibility and prestige, for example by availing himself of photo opportunities and suggesting the choice of location comes with the prestige of FIFA's imprimatur on his leadership.²³ A passionate football fan, Kadyrov is also likely to be a VIP at matches in other parts of Russia.

Sustained engagement by Russia's key international partners can save Titiev from a prison sentence and make it possible for Memorial to continue their invaluable work in Chechnya.

For more Human Rights Watch reporting on the human rights crisis in Chechnya, see:

“Russia: FIFA Should Urge Kremlin to Free Chechen Activist,” May 3, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/05/03/russia-fifa-should-urge-kremlin-free-chechen-activist>

“Chechnya to Host World Cup Finalist Team,” February 14, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/02/14/chechnya-host-world-cup-finalist-team>

“Save Memorial,” January 25, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/01/25/save-memorial>

“Prominent Rights Group Targeted Yet Again in Chechnya,” January 23, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/01/23/prominent-rights-group-targeted-yet-again-chechnya>

²³ At a meeting with the Chechen government organizing committee in February 2018, Kadyrov said, “The Egypt national team’s decision to choose Grozny for its base camp is important for the image of our republic. It is evidence of international recognition of the success of the Chechen Republic in developing and popularizing sport...” “Kadyrov: Chechnya will provide the best possible reception for Egypt’s football team [Кадиров: Чечня обеспечит наилучший прием для сборной Египта по футболу],” TASS, February 12, 2018, <http://tass.ru/spb-news/4952222> (accessed April 30, 2018).

“Arson Attack on Office of Russian Rights Group,” January 17, 2018,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/01/17/arson-attack-office-russian-rights-group>

“Russia: Rights Defender Arbitrarily Arrested in Chechnya,” January, 10 2018,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/01/11/russia-rights-defender-arbitrarily-arrested-chechnya>

“Human Rights Defender Arrested in Chechnya,” January 9, 2018,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/01/09/human-rights-defender-arrested-chechnya>

Report, “*They Have Long Arms and They Can Find Me*,” May 26, 2017,
<https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/05/26/they-have-long-arms-and-they-can-find-me/anti-gay-purge-local-authorities-russias>

Report, “*Like Walking a Minefield*,” August 31, 2016,
<https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/08/31/walking-minefield/vicious-crackdown-critics-russias-chechen-republic>

Suppression of Opposition Campaign Activities

In the run-up to the 2018 presidential election, which was held on March 18, authorities systematically interfered with the presidential campaign of leading opposition politician Alexei Navalny. Formally disqualified from the race due to an outstanding criminal conviction resulting from a politicized, unfair trial, Navalny opened campaign offices in most of Russia’s regions.

Police across Russia searched Navalny’s offices and seized campaign materials. Authorities frequently refused to authorize campaign sidewalk displays and detained campaigners on groundless charges. Police also raided the homes of local campaigners and their relatives.

For more Human Rights Watch reporting on interference with political opposition campaigning, see:

“The Price of Campaigning for the Opposition in Russia,” November 15, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/11/15/price-campaigning-opposition-russia>

“Russia: Nationwide Assaults on Political Opposition Campaign,” September 6, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/09/06/russia-nationwide-assaults-political-opposition-campaign>

Discrimination and Violence Against LGBT People

Following the passage of the 2013 “gay propaganda” law, Russian authorities continue to enforce discriminatory policies against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people. The law bans the “promotion of nontraditional sexual relationships” to children, including via the press, television, radio, and the internet. Foreigners who violate the ban can be deported.²⁴

While supporters of the law claim it protects children, the ban in fact directly harms them by denying them access to essential information and perpetuating stigma against LGBT children and family members. The law has rightly been condemned by the European Court of Human Rights, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the Council of Europe.

Throughout Russia, LGBT people facing persecution often do not file complaints due to fears of further humiliation and abuse from police. Human Rights Watch has found that Russian police consistently fail to prevent harassment and attacks and to investigate anti-LGBT crimes.

In spring 2017, police and security officials in Russia’s Chechen Republic carried out an anti-gay purge, rounding up, torturing, and humiliating dozens of presumed gay men. They held the captives in several unofficial facilities that Chechen authorities have been

²⁴ Federal Law No. 135-FZ, article 3.2(b), http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_148269/30b3f8c55f65557c253227a65b908cc075ce114a/ (accessed April 16, 2018).

maintaining for years to hold incommunicado and tortured individuals suspected of dissent or sabotage. The authorities also informed family members of the captives of their presumed sexual orientation and encouraged “honor killings.” Faced with strong international outcry, the Kremlin pledged to ensure an effective investigation into the allegations. At time of writing, no criminal cases have been opened in connection with the mass detentions and police use of torture.

For more Human Rights Watch reporting on discrimination and violence against LGBT people, see:

“The Olympics Have Left Sochi, but Don’t Forget LGBT Russians,” February 8, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/02/08/olympics-have-left-sochi-dont-forget-lgbt-russians>

“Singer Still Missing After Chechnya’s Anti-Gay Purge,” November 7, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/11/07/singer-still-missing-after-chechnyas-anti-gay-purge>

“Victim of Chechnya’s anti-LGBT purge seeks justice,” October 19, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/10/19/victim-chechnyas-anti-lgbt-purge-seeks-justice>

“Russian Activist in Court on ‘Gay Propaganda’ Charge,” September 19, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/09/19/russian-activist-court-gay-propaganda-charge>

“European Court Condemns Russia’s Gay Propaganda Law,” June 22, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/06/22/european-court-condemns-russias-gay-propaganda-law>

Report, *“They Have Long Arms and They Can Find Me,”* May 26, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/05/26/they-have-long-arms-and-they-can-find-me/anti-gay-purge-local-authorities-russias>

Report, *License to Harm*, December 15, 2014,
<https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/12/15/license-harm/violence-and-harassment-against-lgbt-people-and-activists-russia>

Lack of Domestic Violence Protections

Russia’s legislation does not contain a legal definition of domestic violence, and it is not codified as a separate administrative or criminal offense. The lack of consistent data on the number of women reporting domestic violence to police, the number of cases that go to court, and the number of court convictions or decisions impedes the ability of the authorities to develop and implement an appropriate, effective response. Russia does not have a comprehensive national strategy on how to combat domestic violence.

In February 2017, the Russian government enacted a law that decriminalized domestic violence on first offense if it does not cause harm severe enough to require hospital treatment.

The law was passed with support from conservatives citing “traditional values” and claiming to seek to strengthen Russian families. Women’s rights groups, lawyers, and activists rightly condemned the amendments as a major setback to protections for survivors of domestic violence in Russia and a weakening in the fight to eradicate domestic violence internationally.

For more Human Rights Watch reporting on domestic violence in Russia, see:

“Law Not on Side of Russia’s Domestic Violence Victims,” February 14, 2018,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/02/14/law-not-side-russias-domestic-violence-victims>

“Russia: Bill to Decriminalize Domestic Violence,” January 23, 2017,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/01/23/russia-bill-decriminalize-domestic-violence>

“A Slap is Only the Start,” February 14, 2017,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/02/14/slap-only-start>

III. Russia's Role in Syria

Russia has consistently acted as an enabler and protector of the Syrian government and as a result continues to undermine accountability efforts that would help identify those responsible for the most serious violations, including chemical weapons attacks. In a recent example, Russia obstructed an independent investigation into responsibility for an attack on civilians in Douma, a town near Damascus, where dozens of civilians were killed in April 2018.

Russia's involvement in the civil war in Syria—now in its eighth year—significantly escalated in September 2015 when its forces began joint air operations with the Syrian government. Since then, Russian-Syrian airstrikes have hit civilian facilities and caused hundreds of civilian casualties. Russia also continues to protect Syria from international scrutiny, particularly at the United Nations Security Council where Russia is a permanent member.

During the September to October 2016 bombing campaign of Aleppo, the Russia-Syria coalition conducted aerial attacks that killed over 400 civilians—including 90 children—according to the Violations Documentation Center, a Syrian civil monitoring organization. Human Rights Watch analysis concluded that these airstrikes appeared to be recklessly indiscriminate and included the use of banned weapons such as cluster munitions. In Eastern Ghouta, aerial attacks by the Russia-Syrian coalition killed hundreds of besieged civilians in late 2017, with a sharp and devastating escalation in bombardment in February and March 2018. The latter operation alone resulted in the death of over 600 civilians.

As of April 2018, Russia had used its Security Council veto 12 times to protect the Syrian government from scrutiny, the most recent one at time of writing in the wake of the Douma attack. In November 2017, Russia vetoed several resolutions that would have extended the life of a joint UN Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons panel (known as the JIM) tasked with identifying the parties responsible for using chemical weapons in Syria. In line with Human Rights Watch's own findings, the JIM had previously found the Syrian Air Forces responsible for an April 2017 sarin attack on Khan Sheikhoun, a village in northern Syria.

Russia is benefitting financially from arms dealing with Syria. As Russia's state-owned arms company *Rosoboronexport* continues to test new weapons in Syria, it is also expanding its global reach because of increased visibility and demand. Providing weapons to Syria while its forces are known to be committing war crimes and crimes against humanity may translate into aiding and abetting the commission of those crimes.

For more Human Rights Watch reporting on Russia's role in Syria, see:

"Russia Makes a Killing off its Military Support to Assad," March 13, 2018,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/03/13/russia-makes-killing-its-military-support-assad>

"Syria/Russia: International Inaction as Civilians Die," February 22, 2018,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/02/22/syria/russia-international-inaction-civilians-die>

World Report 2018: Events of 2017, Russia and Syria chapters,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/12/01/russia/syria-war-crimes-month-bombing-aleppo> and <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/syria>

"Syria: New Evidence Shows Pattern of Nerve-Agent Use," May 1, 2017,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/05/01/syria-new-evidence-shows-pattern-nerve-agent-use>

"Russia/Syria: War Crimes in Month of Bombing Aleppo," December 1, 2016,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/12/01/russia/syria-war-crimes-month-bombing-aleppo>

IV. Human Rights Conditions in World Cup Cities

The world's top 32 football teams competing in the 2018 World Cup will play matches in 11 cities across Russia—Moscow, St. Petersburg, Ekaterinburg, Sochi, Kaliningrad, Saransk, Samara, Rostov-on-Don, Volgograd, Kazan, and Nizhnii Novgorod. The outline below highlights a selection of abuses in World Cup host cities that are less visible to World Cup fans and reveals the extent of the crackdown on human rights.

For more Human Rights Watch reporting on Russia, visit:

<https://www.hrw.org/europe/central-asia/russia>

Moscow

Police arbitrarily detained hundreds of peaceful protesters who participated in a June 2017 public rally in Moscow. If protesters questioned their detentions, riot police handled them roughly, and in some cases beat them with truncheons and kicked and punched them. One protester in Moscow spent a week in a hospital with a concussion after a police officer hit her.

In November 2017, four young men brutally attacked two female LGBT rights activists who were taking part in an inclusive family conference in Moscow. Police arrived promptly after the attack but made no move to search for the attackers. Both activists filed complaints with the police, but at time of writing police had not opened a criminal case.

St. Petersburg

Hundreds of peaceful protesters were also detained during the June 2017 public rally in St. Petersburg. Some of those detained spent up to two nights sleeping on the floor or in chairs at overcrowded precincts and had to rely on activists to bring food and drinking water. Police at some precincts denied detainees access to lawyers. In some cases that led to court appearances, judges found protestors guilty of offences by simply rubberstamping police allegations while failing to have regard to the defense offered and in some cases without even giving the defense an opportunity to argue their case.

In late January 2018, two St. Petersburg anti-fascism activists went missing for days, only to reappear in court facing charges of alleged involvement in a terrorist organization. They are accused of being members of a previously unheard-of anarchist group called “Network,” but human rights activists believe the confessions of at least one of the men was extracted under torture.²⁵ Media reports have exposed several other recent cases of police use of torture in St. Petersburg detention facilities.²⁶

Kazan

Human Rights Watch documented multiple instances of harassment and arrest of campaigners for opposition politician Alexei Navalny in Kazan.

In August 2017, a court sentenced Kazan Navalny campaign coordinator Elvira Dmitrieva to 10 days’ detention for “repeated violation” of regulations on mass gatherings for a social media announcement calling on Navalny supporters in Kazan to hand out campaign flyers. The judge accepted the police argument that Dmitrieva had aimed to encourage an “unlimited number of people... to take part in an unsanctioned public event.”

Volgograd

In April 2017, police detained Human Rights Watch research consultant Semyon Simonov as he attempted to speak to workers outside the Volgograd Arena. Without probable cause of any wrongdoing, police detained and questioned him for three hours, threatening him with possible criminal charges. He was released without charge. Simonov is currently in the process of challenging his detention, the use of force used against him in detention, and an illegal search of his possessions. During a speech at a major sports and human rights conference held in December 2017, a FIFA official said that Simonov’s detention was “unacceptable,”²⁷ and a FIFA official attended a February 2018 appeals hearing for Simonov in Volgograd.

²⁵ St. Petersburg Public Oversight Commission conclusion on Viktor Filinkov and Igor Shishkin, February 4, 2018, <http://onkspb.ru/files/download/27/0a4628cc> (accessed April 26, 2018).

²⁶ Vera Chelischeva, “‘My mouth was full of blood’ [‘Рот был полон крови’],” *Novaya Gazeta*, February 16, 2018, <https://www.novayagazeta.ru/articles/2018/02/16/75530-rot-by-polon-krovi> (accessed February 20, 2018). Human Rights Watch has not conducted its own research into torture in St. Petersburg detention facilities.

²⁷ Minky Worden, Twitter post, December 1, 2018, <https://twitter.com/MinkysHighjinks/status/936533154441187329> (accessed April 5, 2018).

In January 2018, Simonov learned that he is on two Russian Federal Security Service lists of “persons under particular control,” apparently as a result of his human rights work on behalf of workers ahead of the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi. He believes this to be the reason for other unexplained detentions by police, like the one in Volgograd.²⁸

Rostov-on-Don

Human Rights Watch found that Navalny campaigners in Rostov-on-Don have faced harassment and interference by police and other officials.

In July 2017, the Leningrad Regional Court in Rostov-on-Don found three supporters of leading Russian opposition figure Alexei Navalny guilty of participation in an unauthorized gathering. The court fined Rostov-on-Don Navalny campaign coordinator Yelena Kulikova and activist Fyodor Laptev 20,000 rubles (US\$340) and sentenced Navalny campaign volunteer Anastasia Daineko to 20 hours of community service. Kulikova had been holding a one-person picket in a local park while Daineko and Laptev were filming her on their mobile phones.²⁹

Sochi

Sochi was the host for the 2014 Winter Olympic Games. During the preparations for the Games, Human Rights Watch documented widespread labor abuses and exploitation of migrant workers, illegal land expropriations, and intimidation and harassment of activists and journalists who criticized the government’s actions in connection with the Games.

For more information, please see the Human Rights Watch’s 2013 report, *Race to the Bottom: Exploitation of Migrant Workers Ahead of Russia’s 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi*, available at <https://www.hrw.org/report/2013/02/06/race-bottom/exploitation-migrant-workers-ahead-russias-2014-winter-olympic-games>

²⁸ See Human Rights Watch, “Welcome Support for Workers’ Rights Advocate in Russia,” February 26, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/02/26/welcome-support-workers-rights-advocate-russia>, Human Rights Watch, “Russian Human Rights Defender Faces Police in Court,” November 9, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/11/09/russian-human-rights-defender-faces-police-court>, Human Rights Watch, “Interview: Why World Cup Rights Work in Russia Is No Game,” June 14, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/06/14/interview-why-world-cup-rights-work-russia-no-game>.

²⁹ “In Rostov-on-Don Navalny supporters were fined for badges and taking photos [В Ростове-на-Дону троих сторонников Навального оштрафовали за значки и фотосъемку], OVD-Info, July 13, 2017, <https://ovdinfo.org/express-news/2017/07/13/v-rostove-na-donu-troih-storonnikov-navalnogo-oshtrafovali-za-znachki-i> (accessed April 26, 2018).

Nizhnii Novgorod

In February 2015, former Nizhnii Novgorod governor and prominent opposition leader Boris Nemtsov was murdered on a bridge near the Kremlin in Moscow. Nemtsov was one of the few vocal opposition figures in Russia and spoke out strongly and repeatedly against government corruption. In 2013 he published a scathing report on corruption in the preparations for the Winter Olympic Games in Sochi and reportedly planned to publish information on Russia's involvement in the war in Ukraine.

In March 2018, human rights activist Stanislav Dmitrievsky and three other activists were arrested while participating in a peaceful public gathering to commemorate Nemtsov in Nizhnii Novgorod. Dmitrievsky was convicted of participating in an unsanctioned rally and sentenced to 20 days' arrest.

Kaliningrad

In November 2017, police in Kaliningrad arrested Igor Rudnikov, the editor and owner of the opposition newspaper *Novye Kolyosa* (New Wheels), on trumped-up extortion charges. During the arrest, Rudnikov was ill-treated by police and suffered head trauma and a broken arm. At time of writing, Rudnikov had remained in detention for over 100 days while his trial is ongoing, and violence inflicted by police during his arrest had not been investigated.³⁰

Novye Kolyosa is known for its investigations into allegations of corruption by local officials, including during the construction of World Cup infrastructure.

Ekaterinburg

In February 2018, a court in Ekaterinburg ruled that 40-year-old Yulia Savinovskikh was unfit to foster two children, claiming that because she allegedly exudes a “style of male behavior,” she violated Russian family legislation as well as the “traditions and mentality” of Russian society. The authorities cited a transgender blog she wrote and a recent breast removal surgery, done for health reasons, as evidence.

³⁰ “Russia: Kaliningrad editor held for past 100 days on trumped-up charge,” Reporters Without Borders, February 8, 2018, <https://rsf.org/en/news/russia-kaliningrad-editor-held-past-100-days-trumped-charge> (accessed February 20, 2018).

The two five-year-old boys had been living with Savinovskikh and her husband for three-and-a-half and two years, respectively, and were removed from Savinovskikh's home in August 2017. The two children are now living in an orphanage for children with disabilities.³¹

Saransk

According to the independent Russian online news outlet Mediazona, on January 27 two Navalny supporters were arrested and detained overnight by local authorities in Saransk as they were handing out flyers to advertise a planned “voter’s strike” rally which took place in Saransk and nationwide on January 28.³²

Russian media reported that on January 31 four others involved in protest activities in Saransk were variously issued fines by a Saransk court for “participation in an unauthorized gathering.”³³

Samara

Five Russian organizations based in the Samara region have been found in violation of the 2015 law on “undesirable organizations.”

The charges against the organizations stemmed from hyperlinks to websites of foreign “undesirables” on the websites of the targeted Russian organizations. The hyperlinks had been posted before the foreign organizations were banned. Since 2015, Russian authorities have blacklisted as “undesirable” 14 organizations, most of them American.

³¹ “Russian Government Takes Children from Foster Mother Because of Breast Surgery,” Human Rights Watch, November 17, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/11/17/russian-government-takes-children-foster-mother-because-breast-surgery>.

³² “Activist detained for flyers remains in Saransk police custody for more than a day [Задержанного за листовки активиста более суток не выпускают из полиции Саранска],” Mediazona, January 29, 2018, <https://ovdinfo.org/express-news/2018/01/29/zaderzhannogo-za-listovki-aktivista-bolee-sutok-ne-vypuskavut-iz-policii> (accessed February 20, 2018).

³³ “Two Navalny supporters were arrested for a day after an unsanctioned rally in Saransk, four others were fined [Двое сторонников Навального арестованы на сутки после несогласованной акции в Саранске, еще четверо заплатят штраф],” Interfax, January 31, 2018, <http://www.interfax-russia.ru/Povoliie/news.asp?id=905524&sec=1671> (accessed February 20, 2018).

V. FIFA's Human Rights Commitments

FIFA has taken positive steps in the last two years to improve respect for human rights in its operations. In April 2016, FIFA revised its statutes to include the statement, “FIFA is committed to respecting all internationally recognized human rights and shall strive to promote the protection of these rights.” In May 2016, it announced that human rights requirements would be part of the consultation and bid process phases of the selection of the 2026 World Cup host. In September 2016, FIFA created and staffed a Human Rights Manager position to develop its human rights-related work, and in March 2017, it established an independent Human Rights Advisory Board to provide advice and report on FIFA’s implementation of its human rights commitments. In May 2017, FIFA released a new Human Rights Policy promising rights protection across its global operations.³⁴

Citations from Key Elements of FIFA’s Human Rights Policy

- “In line with the UNGPs [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights], FIFA will exercise its leverage, and seek to increase said leverage where necessary, in connection with adverse human rights impacts arising through its business relationships. To this end, FIFA will explore and make use of all options available to it within the said relationships.”³⁵
- “FIFA will strive to go beyond its responsibility to respect human rights, as enshrined in the UNGPs, by taking measures to promote the protection of human rights and positively contribute to their enjoyment, especially where it is able to apply effective leverage to help increase said enjoyment or where this relates to strengthening human rights in or through football.”³⁶
- “FIFA helps protect those who advocate respect for human rights associated with its activities and is committed to contributing to providing remedy where individuals have been adversely affected by activities associated with FIFA.”³⁷

³⁴ FIFA, *FIFA's Human Rights Policy* (Zurch: FIFA, 2017), https://resources.fifa.com/mm/document/affederation/footballgovernance/02/89/33/12/fifashumanrightspolicy_neutral.pdf (accessed February 19, 2018).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9

- “FIFA will respect and not interfere with the work of both human rights defenders who voice concerns about adverse human rights impacts relating to FIFA and media representatives covering FIFA’s events and activities.”³⁸
- “Where the freedoms of human rights defenders and media representatives are at risk, FIFA will take adequate measures for their protection, including by using its leverage with the relevant authorities.”³⁹
- “Discrimination is an issue in the world of football both on and off the pitch. FIFA strives to create a discrimination-free environment within its organisation and throughout all of its activities. ... Article 4 of the FIFA Statutes prohibits discrimination of any kind against a country, private person or group of people on account of race, skin colour, ethnic, national or social origin, gender, disability, language, religion, political opinion or any other opinion, wealth, birth or any other status, sexual orientation or any other reason.”⁴⁰
- In November 2017, Federico Addiechi, FIFA’s head of sustainability and diversity told the New York Times, “If there are any cases of abuse, or even possibility of human rights defenders or journalists being forced into a difficult corner, then according to our statutes and human rights policy FIFA will intervene.”⁴¹

Report by the FIFA Human Rights Advisory Board

In early 2017, FIFA created a Human Rights Advisory Board, an independent body comprised of United Nations representatives, civil society actors, trade unions, and FIFA sponsors to advise on FIFA’s human rights obligations in the course of biannual meetings and reports.⁴² In March 2017, the Board held its first meeting, and in September 2017 it released a corresponding report evaluating FIFA’s human rights progress and identifying key recommendations for FIFA to prevent and respond to human rights issues.⁴³

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 6

⁴¹ Tariq Panja, “Ahead of World Cup, Fans Are Warned About Homophobia and Racism in Russia,” New York Times, November 28, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/28/sports/soccer/russia-world-cup-fans.html> (accessed April 5, 2018).

⁴² FIFA, *Human Rights Advisory Board Terms of Reference*, November 2016, http://resources.fifa.com/mm/document/affederation/footballgovernance/02/87/54/89/AdvisoryBoard_ToR_final_Neutral.pdf (accessed April 5, 2018).

⁴³ FIFA, *Report by the FIFA Human Rights Advisory Board* (2017), http://resources.fifa.com/mm/document/affederation/footballgovernance/02/91/92/38/fifahumanrightsenweb_neutral.pdf (accessed February 19, 2018).

With regard to the 2018 World Cup, the Board echoed in its September 2017 report many of the labor rights concerns Human Rights Watch documented in its June 2017 report, including safety issues, worker deaths, delays in and non-payment of wages, and exploitative use of North Korean workers on the St. Petersburg Stadium site. The Board highlighted that World Cup-related construction is heavily reliant on labor performed by migrant workers, who often face a higher risk of exploitation due to language barriers, dependency on employers to maintain a legal immigration status, and fear of using complaint mechanisms due to their status as migrants.⁴⁴

The Board noted that the FIFA monitoring system is a proactive measure but underlined that the lack of publicly available information on the results of monitoring make it difficult to assess the monitoring system's efficacy. The Board also questioned whether the monitoring system is equipped to address the root causes of labor issues that systematically recur.

In its report the Board also called on FIFA to identify and address risks to freedoms of assembly, association, and expression in connection with FIFA football tournaments and other events and to communicate its expectations to the Russian government with regard to these freedoms in advance of FIFA-sponsored events.

Specifically, the Board recommended that FIFA, in alignment with its own Human Rights Policy, ensure the existence of accessible channels for human rights defenders, journalists, and others at risk of arbitrary detention or arrest to safely raise concerns, including ahead of the 2018 World Cup.⁴⁵

Compilation of Recommendations Human Rights Watch Has Made to FIFA

- Significantly increase transparency and reporting of implementation of FIFA's human rights commitments. Transparency is essential to credibility, accountability, sustainability, and meaningful change.
- Fully implement the FIFA Human Rights Advisory Board's recommendations listed in their September 2017 report.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 15

⁴⁵ *Report by the FIFA Human Rights Advisory Board*, p. 14.

Regarding the World Cup 2018 Workplace Monitoring System

FIFA should publish without delay:

- Detailed information on the workplace monitoring program including:
 - Technical aspects of the monitoring, its methodology, frequency, length of inspections, materials consulted, individuals interviewed, the nature of those interviews (including regarding privacy and confidentiality), and the relevant qualifications of inspectors, including languages spoken;
 - Detailed findings of the inspections, including violations identified, location and frequency, remedies provided to workers, and actions taken vis-à-vis employers.
- Information regarding the participation of North Korean workers in construction on the St. Petersburg Stadium, including any information about the labor conditions on the site and on the fate and whereabouts of the workers after they stopped working on FIFA's construction sites.
- Full information on workplace injuries and deaths, as well as on labor disputes on construction sites for all World Cup 2018 venues and any actions taken by FIFA and the Russian government in response to these issues.

Regarding Human Rights in Chechnya

- Consistent with its Human Rights Policy, which explicitly expresses FIFA's commitment to and respect for human rights, FIFA should insist on the release of Oyub Titiev. As the head of Memorial in Chechnya, he is one of the few human rights defenders remaining in the North Caucasus. All others have been threatened, silenced, forced to work underground, compelled to leave, or even killed. Without Titiev able to work, there is no meaningful human rights protection in Chechnya, and this is a situation FIFA should strive to address.

Regarding LGBT Rights and Russia's Anti-LGBT Law

- Russia's "gay propaganda" law violates changes to FIFA's Statutes and Human Rights Policy's requirements on nondiscrimination. FIFA has frequently requested that World Cup hosts change laws and should ask the Russian government to repeal the anti-LGBT propaganda law in accordance with its own statutes and policies.

Regarding Freedom of Assembly Ahead of the 2018 World Cup

- FIFA should ask the Russian government to revise Presidential Decree No. 202 so that the authorities cannot use it to arbitrarily restrict peaceful assemblies and free expression during the upcoming 2018 FIFA World Cup.
- FIFA should also ask the Russian government to conduct investigations into violations of the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly before and during the 2017 Confederations Cup.

Regarding Human Rights Defender Semyon Simonov, Working on World Cup-Related Issues

- Consistent with its Human Rights Policy, FIFA should insist that the authorities review the decision to place Simonov on two FSB watch lists, which he believes interfered with his ability to do human rights work.

Regarding Media Freedom

- Ensure that there are no undue restrictions on local and foreign journalists to report not only on World Cup matches and related activities and events but to investigate and report on social, economic, and political issues, should they wish to do so.

For more information on FIFA's human rights policies, see:

FIFA.com, "FIFA, LOC mark International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination," March 22, 2018,
<http://www.fifa.com/worldcup/news/y=2018/m=3/news=fifa-loc-mark-international-day-for-the-elimination-of-racial-discrimination.html>

FIFA, *FIFA's Human Rights Policy*, May 2017,
http://resources.fifa.com/mm/document/affederation/footballgovernance/02/89/33/12/fifashumanrightspolicy_neutral.pdf

FIFA, *Fact Sheet: FIFA's work on Human Rights*, November 2016,
http://resources.fifa.com/mm/Document/AFFederation/FootballGovernance/02/87/55/00/FIFABackgroundInfoonHumanRights_Neutral.pdf

FIFA, *FIFA Statutes: April 2016 Edition*, February 26, 2016,
http://resources.fifa.com/mm/document/affederation/generic/02/78/29/07/fifastatutsweben_neutral.pdf

VI. Contacts

Regional NGOs

- Memorial Human Rights Center (Moscow, regional branches)
 - Contact: +7-495-225-3118, +7-916-061-0500, press@memo.ru
 - Website: <https://memohrc.org/en>
- Civic Assistance (Moscow, regional branches)
 - Contact: Press Secretary Darya Manina +7-926-546 4684, refugee.press@gmail.com
 - Website: <https://refugee.ru/en/>
- Committee Against Torture (Nizhnii Novgorod, regional branches)
 - Contact: +7-831-216-1470, +7-831-216-1471, komitet@pytkam.net
 - Website: <http://pytkam.net/eng>
- ANNA Center (Moscow, regional branches)
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- Citizens Watch (St. Petersburg)
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 - Website: <http://www.citwatch.org/en/>
- Environmental Watch on the North Caucasus (Krasnodar Region)
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 - Website: <http://www.ewnc.org/>
- Kazan Human Rights Center (Kazan, Republic of Tatarstan)
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 - Website: <http://www.investigation.ru/>

HUMAN RIGHTS GUIDE FOR REPORTERS

2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia

This *Human Rights Guide for Reporters* covering the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia looks beyond the action on the field to open a broader lens on human rights concerns surrounding Russia's preparations for and hosting of the tournament.

In 2016 and 2017, Human Rights Watch published findings about various labor rights violations against workers engaged on World Cup construction sites. The findings are summarized here. In addition, the guide outlines the series of repressive laws that restrict freedom of expression, association, and assembly in Russia, information on the serious problems of homophobia and domestic violence, and the crackdown on human rights defenders in Russia's Chechen Republic. Some human rights concerns in the 11 World Cup host cities across Russia are described. Russia is also facing scrutiny from human rights groups, including Human Rights Watch, for its continued involvement in abusive military operations in support of government forces in Syria.

FIFA is also a focus: the international football association's approach to human rights has changed in important ways since 2015, including through the adoption of a Human Rights Policy. In 2016 FIFA launched a monitoring system to check labor conditions at World Cup construction sites in Russia. The guide describes Human Rights Watch's concerns on both issues and summarizes our recommendations to FIFA.

Human Rights Watch hopes this guide will be a useful tool for journalists interested in reporting on a wider range of issues in Russia.



The Russian and Brazilian football teams play a pre-World Cup international friendly match at Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow, Russia on March 23, 2018. The FIFA World Cup final will be played at this stadium on July 15 2018.

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