



October 29, 2019

Ms. Joyce Cook  
Chief Social Responsibility & Education Officer  
Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)  
FIFA-Strasse 20  
Zurich, Switzerland

**Re: Bidding Process and Human Rights Requirements for the 2021 China Club World Cup**

Dear Ms. Cook,

At a news conference on October 24 in Shanghai, FIFA President [Gianni Infantino announced](#) FIFA had granted China the rights to host the expanded Club World Cup in 2021. We are writing to ask how FIFA granted this flagship tournament to China’s state-run football federation without undertaking the comprehensive human rights risk assessment and stakeholder consultation set out under [the United Nations Guiding Principles of Business and Human Rights](#) (the “UN Guiding Principles”) and FIFA’s own Human Rights Policy.

President Infantino told the news conference in Shanghai that “it is not the mission of FIFA to solve the problems of the world.” However, it is FIFA’s narrow and accepted responsibility to conduct a human rights risk assessment for host countries and to hold a transparent stakeholder consultation under [FIFA’s Statutes](#), [Human Rights Policy](#), the reformed [Bidding Process](#) for hosts.

Since Human Rights Watch reports [extensively on abuses in China](#) and maintains a relationship with FIFA through the Sport & Rights Alliance and the Centre for Sport and Human Rights, we would be a stakeholder to consult, and were surprised to learn this decision was brought to the FIFA Council without the required [transparent bidding process](#) or any structured investigation or consideration of the major human rights risks to athletes, fans, workers, journalists and others.

**Please provide answers to the following questions** so that they can be reflected in our reporting:

1. **Was there any bidding process** for the 2021 Club World Cup? Who were the other bidders?

2. **Was there a human rights risk assessment** as required under the UN Guiding Principles of hosting the Club World Cup in China before FIFA's appointment? If not, why? If so, please share the results of that assessment.
3. **Did FIFA conduct any stakeholder consultation** with FIFA's Human Rights Advisory Board, external stakeholders, and internal affected groups before the 2021 Club World Cup decision was made? Which groups were consulted, and why were the members of the Sports & Rights Alliance not consulted?
4. **Did FIFA make any attempt to discuss the bid** with human rights experts and activists in China? With China human rights experts outside the country? If so, what were their views? If not, why not?
5. **How does FIFA intend to uphold its human rights standards in China** when there are no independent labor unions and no free media to ensure independent reporting of abuses?
6. **How and when will human rights be integrated** into the 2021 Club World Cup hosting agreement with China?

As Human Rights Watch has documented, serious human rights violations are currently taking place in China, including [labor abuses](#), [mass arbitrary detention](#), [mass surveillance](#), [torture](#), [severe restrictions on press freedom](#) and [ill mistreatment of more than one million Uighurs and other Muslim ethnic minorities](#) in "political re-education camps" in Xinjiang.

FIFA's Human Rights Policy says: "FIFA will constructively engage with relevant authorities and other stakeholders and make every effort to uphold its international human rights responsibilities." FIFA has a responsibility to work with its Human Rights Advisory Board and consult a wide range of stakeholders, including potentially affected groups and individuals and their legitimate representatives before major hosting decisions. Yet FIFA has not transparently engaged with internal or external human rights stakeholders in advance of the Club World Cup decision.

This is all the more important because [China has said it will bid to host](#) the 2030 or 2034 World Cup, and FIFA should not set up a double standard where some countries are exempt from the human rights rules.

Adding human rights as a hosting requirement *after* appointing China as the host of the 2021 Club World Cup has already surrendered important leverage. However, FIFA still has the clear responsibility to integrate and implement human rights requirements and standards into the hosting agreement.

We are deeply troubled by this development and ask for confirmation that human rights protections will be incorporated in the hosting agreement with China, and a prompt response to the questions outlined above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Minky Worden', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Minky Worden  
Director, Global Initiatives  
Human Rights Watch  
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Cc Mr. Federico Addiechi, Head of Sustainability & Diversity  
Cc Mr. Andreas Graf, Human Rights Manager