

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

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August 28, 2016

Mr. Ofer Eini
Chair
Israel Football Association

Dear Mr. Eini,

Human Rights Watch is preparing a publication on the inclusion, in Israel's national football association, of six clubs located in Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank. The purpose of this letter is to share our concerns about the inclusion of the clubs and to invite you to provide information about the Israeli Football Association's (IFA) policies relevant to the issue. Our report will reflect all pertinent information that you provide by September 10.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) is an independent, non-governmental organization that monitors and reports on human rights in 90 countries around the world. All of our reporting is available at www.hrw.org. Human Rights Watch believes that allowing these six clubs to continue playing in the Israeli football association, from within Israeli settlements in the West Bank, violates the human rights responsibilities to which FIFA has committed.

In January, HRW published a report, [Occupation, Inc.](#), analyzing business activities in Israeli settlements located in the occupied West Bank, through the lens of the U.N. Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Our research indicates that business activity in Israeli settlements inherently contributes to and benefits from serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. For that reason, we recommend that businesses cease all settlement-related activities, including locating activities in settlements, contracting for services in settlements and supporting settlements and settlement related-activities.

We have researched the six clubs playing in the Israeli Football Association (IFA), whose official, approved fields are located in Israeli settlements: Ariel Indoor Football Club (futsal) (Ariel), Ariel Municipal Football Club (Ariel), Beitar Giv'at Zeev Shabi (Giv'at Zeev), Beitar Ma'aleh

Adumim (Ma'aleh Adumim), Hapo'el Jordan Valley (Tomer), and Hapoel Oranit (Oranit). We note that at least one football field, approved by IFA judges applying FIFA rules, is built on land that is owned by a Palestinian family who can no longer use or access it. In all cases, the fields are built on land that, whether public or private, belongs to Palestinians and can, under the international rules regarding belligerent occupation, only be used for their benefit or for Israeli military needs. Palestinians are not allowed to enter Israeli settlements, except as laborers who require special permits.

We would like to ask:

1. Is the IFA familiar with the U.N. Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights? If so, has it taken steps to implement the Guiding Principles? Does IFA consider itself bound by FIFA's human rights policies?
2. Does the IFA have policies or regulations on where IFA clubs may play their games? If so, what are they?
3. Please send us any membership agreements, contracts or other documents regarding the membership of the six clubs mentioned above in the IFA.

Please send your written response by September 10, 2016, so that we can include it in our publication. We of course welcome any additional comments or responses you may wish to send, and we will reflect them in our upcoming publication.

I thank you in advance for your kind cooperation, and I welcome a chance to meet in person, as well, in order to discuss these issues. I will call to follow up, and I can be reached in the meantime [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]@hrw.org.

Sincerely,



Sari Bashi
Israel and Palestine Country Director
Middle East and North Africa
Human Rights Watch