



Statement on Human Rights at the 2022 FIFA Men's World Cup in Qatar

November 14th, 2022

As Canada's national 2SLGBTQI organization, Egale Canada is joining the call on international sports federations, including the World Soccer Federation (FIFA) to fulfil their obligation to prioritize human rights. The upcoming FIFA Men's World Cup in Qatar has sparked an important debate on the responsibility of sports federations to protect the human rights of athletes, spectators, and the people living in countries that host sporting events.

Despite [thorough documentation](#) of horrific human rights abuses in major international sporting events, no major federation has made compliance with human rights standards a requirement for host countries. Instead, the [essential qualification](#) is the infrastructural capacity to host a profitable event. This has resulted in the sacrifice of 2SLGBTQI people's safety at events on many occasions, including this month in Qatar.

Qatar's repressive policies toward LGBTQI people have been condemned by organizations including [Human Rights Watch](#), [Amnesty International](#), and [ILGA](#). According to ILGA, same-sex sexual activity is punishable by imprisonment in Qatar, and the government may deport or bar entry to 2SLGBTQI people at its discretion. By allowing Qatar to host the World Cup, FIFA has made it clear that it does not consider the safety of 2SLGBTQI athletes and spectators a priority at its events.

As other organizations have pointed out, LGBTQI people in Qatar are not helped by FIFA and the Qatari government's [repeated assurances](#) that exceptions from these brutal laws will be made for the World Cup. In fact, the Qatari World Cup Ambassador very recently [reiterated](#) his homophobic and unscientific position that homosexuality is a mental illness. International sports federations, including FIFA, must disqualify countries with governments that perpetrate grave human rights violations from being able to host

prestigious sporting events. To do otherwise is to risk the security of sexual and gender minorities and tacitly endorse gross human rights violations by these governments.

The construction of the infrastructure, including stadiums and hotels, for the 2022 FIFA World Cup has already [been associated](#) with dozens of tragic and preventable deaths of impoverished and abused migrant workers. FIFA and its corporate sponsors must be held accountable for allowing the 2022 Men's World Cup to go forward despite the shocking human toll it has already taken and will continue to take. No sports event is worth sacrificing the lives and human rights of labourers or other residents, nor the dignity of 2SLGBTQI athletes, spectators, or anyone else.

There can be no compromise on human rights in sporting events, and Egale Canada is committed to holding international sports federations including FIFA accountable. We stand in solidarity with LGBTQI people in Qatar and with organizations around the world fighting for justice for those who have been harmed by the 2022 FIFA Men's World Cup.

International sports federations are organizations whose decisions have a profound impact on the professional lives of the athletes who compete within the sports they regulate and, as the Qatari case has made very clear, on the lives of people in the countries that host their events. As such, they are also bound by human rights obligations.

Egale is calling on all international sports federations to establish mandatory human rights criteria, including respect for the safety and dignity of 2SLGBTQI people, for all countries seeking to host international sporting events. Profit should always be a secondary consideration to respect and equity for all.

Decisions like the one to host the 2022 FIFA Men's World Cup in Qatar in the face of documented rights violations must not be repeated. In sports, as everywhere else, governing bodies have a responsibility to act in accordance with the principles of fundamental human rights.