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FIFA Should Never Be Used as A Tool to Whitewash Israel's Crimes

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK ([AOHR UK](http://www.aohr.org.uk)) condemned the participation of the President of the International Football Association ([FIFA](http://www.fifa.com)) Gianni Infantino in the inauguration ceremony of "The Friedman Center for Peace through Strength," which was held on October 11, 2021 in the occupied Jerusalem at the Museum of the so-called "Tolerance", which was built on the ruins MamanAllah Cemetery.

In his speech during the ceremony, the FIFA President stated the possibility of holding the 2030 World Cup in Israel alongside neighbouring countries such as the United Arab Emirates to encourage normalisation.

In an urgent letter to FIFA, AOHR UK highlighted that the FIFA president made a grave mistake by participating in this ceremony, as this event is a political activity that has nothing to do with football, and the participants are extreme settlers and supporters who openly proclaim their ethnic cleansing and settlement projects.

Ambassador Friedman under the Trump administration was known to be one of the sponsors of the decisions of the Trump administration to annex the occupied territories, including the Golan, recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and transferring the US embassy to Jerusalem.

It is crystal clear that despite the name of the center, it does not seek to achieve a just and comprehensive peace that preserves the rights of the Palestinians, but it rather seeks to achieve peace and security for Israel only and by force. As for the location; the celebration was organised in the occupied Jerusalem on a cemetery that was bulldozed without any respect for the sacredness of the dead.



As to the suggestion of holding the 2030 World Cup in Israel; it seems like the president of "FIFA" neither sees nor hears about the crimes committed by Israel on a daily basis.

AOHR UK indicated that the rules governing the International Football Association prohibit it from engaging in political affairs and supporting any entity that violates its laws.

The Federation is entrusted with organising football tournaments according to the regulations and laws away from political quarrels, and it also has the duty to prevent governments from interfering in the affairs of local federations, so how could the president of the Federation support an occupying entity that has been oppressing and besieging a people for decades!

The President of FIFA is aware that Israel is an occupying entity that commits many crimes, the foremost of which is settlement.

He should have refrained from meeting with any government agencies or participating in political celebrations that would harm football and raise questions about mixing football with politics and supporting the perpetrators of serious crimes.

The President of FIFA also knows that the UAE, the sponsor of the Abraham Agreement, is not interested in spreading peace in the region, as evidenced by its crimes committed in [Yemen](#) and Libya, support for dictatorial regimes in the region, and its investments in Israeli settlements, which constitute a war crime, in addition to the suppression of freedom of opinion and expression at home, and the arrest of activists, opponents, women and men.

[AOHR UK](#) pointed out that choosing any country for organising the World Cup is subject to strict regulations based on competition between countries. The choice of the country is based on the best football project proposal and it has nothing to do with political issues. Rather, the country's human rights record should play a major role in determining the winning country.

The participation of the FIFA President in such a celebration and making such statements, indicates a lack of awareness of the dangers that would result from it. In one way or another, he presented the well-established football institution "FIFA" as a



supporter of a country that commits all kinds of crimes, the foremost of which is [settlement](#).

The International Football Association should open an urgent investigation into the actions of the President of the Federation did, apologise to the Palestinian people and the football community, and pledge to keep the football away from politics and work within the framework of respecting the basic principles of human rights.

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK (AOHR UK)