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## Statement: Overturn ban on F1 drivers' protests

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK (AOHR UK) condemns the decision by [Formula 1](#) governing body FIA to ban drivers from unapproved protests on race weekends.

According to an update to the FIA sporting code, drivers must now ask permission to protest on any issue.

It now forbids "the general making and display of political, religious and personal statements or comments notably in violation of the general principle of neutrality promoted by the FIA under its statutes, unless previously approved in writing by the FIA".

The move is probably a response to drivers like [Lewis Hamilton](#), who has raised human rights concerns about Grand Prix hosts Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

He has also made powerful statements supporting causes like Black Lives Matter in the west.

Human rights campaigners have called out FIA's hypocrisy on the issue. The body cancelled races in Russia following its invasion of Ukraine but has failed to raise any objections to other host nations.

Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the UAE are notorious for their brutal repression of human rights activists at home and involvement in the devastating war on Yemen abroad. It would appear that concerns over human rights only apply if the host country is an enemy of the west.

Grand Prix events are lucrative to FIA, and we have seen numerous occasions on which human rights have been ignored in the greater business interest.



This is an attack on drivers' right to free speech, which is more vital than ever when they are told to work in absolute dictatorships.

Without this freedom of expression, [F1](#) hosts like Saudi Arabia, UAE and Bahrain will have the ability to use Grand Prix events as “sportswashing” for their appalling records.

AOHR UK calls on the FIA to overturn this dangerous ruling. We also demand that the human rights records of potential race hosts be taken into consideration before awarding them high-profile events.

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