Beat: Sports

FIFA: Between the principles of sporting justice and the pressures of USA power

World Cup football

Kuwait, 17.06.2026, 14:47 Time

USPA NEWS - Since the inception of the World Cup, football has been a universal language that transcends political, ethnic, and religious boundaries, bringing people together under the banner of fair competition and sporting enjoyment. However, with the approach of the 2026 World Cup in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, legitimate questions arise about the extent to which this edition aligns with the principles that FIFA has always championed.

Hosting the tournament by three countries was presented as a historic step reflecting the global reach of the game. However, the reality points to significant challenges that could make this edition one of the most complex in terms of logistics, economics, and politics. Fans who were accustomed to traveling to a single country and following their team with relative ease now face a long and expensive journey requiring travel between multiple countries and distant cities, accompanied by soaring prices for airfare, accommodation, and transportation.

Even more concerning is that the visa issue remains one of the biggest challenges facing football fans worldwide. Millions of fans dream of attending the World Cup, but obtaining a visa can become a real obstacle, preventing many from realizing this dream. This raises a crucial question: how can a global tournament fulfill its mission if its doors are not equally open to fans from all over the world?

While FIFA consistently emphasizes the principles of inclusivity, equality, and non-discrimination, recent indicators have raised concerns about the overlap of political considerations with sports. Any action or decision that prevents a referee, media figure, fan, or sports official from participating for non-sporting reasons puts the credibility of those principles at stake and raises questions about the extent of sports' independence from political calculations.

No one disputes a country's right to protect its security and enforce its laws, but the situation becomes problematic when security measures escalate into excessive strictness or exceptional treatment, giving the impression that sports have become more subject to political influence than to the values ??of fair competition. The World Cup is not a political conference, but a global festival where everyone should feel welcome and respected.

Amid these challenges, the role of FIFA, the international football federation, stands out. It is supposed to be the primary guardian of the game's values, yet observers note that FIFA appears less stringent when it comes to major powers with significant political and economic influence. This highlights a serious problem of double standards. Standards strictly enforced against some countries become more flexible when economic interests are greater and political influence stronger. This was evident when Russia was banned from the World Cup due to the war in Ukraine, while Israel was not barred from participating in the qualifiers. FIFA, in particular, and the International Olympic Committee, in general, disregarded all principles and norms, focusing solely on the interests of the superpower, America, and its demands.

It is important to emphasize that the success of the World Cup is not measured by the number of modern stadiums or the size of revenues and commercial contracts, but rather by its ability to unite the world's people around an exceptional sporting event that everyone feels belongs to them. If the tournament becomes an elitist event governed by political constraints and exorbitant costs, it will lose a significant part of its humanitarian and sporting message.

The question that reality will answer after the tournament begins is: Will the 2026 World Cup be a global celebration of football as we know it, or a new model of the dominance of politics and money over the world’s most popular game?

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-26944/-fifa-between-the-principles-of-sporting-justice-and-the-pressures-of-usa-power.html

Editorial office and responsibility:
V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Dr. Abdullah Al-Ghasab

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Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619