



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

TOMMY SHEPPARD MP

Gianni Infantino, President of FIFA  
David Gill, Vice-President of FIFA  
Tokyo Sexwale, Chair, FIFA Monitoring Committee for Israel-Palestine  
**Fédération Internationale de Football Association**  
FIFA-Strasse 20,  
P.O. Box 8044 Zurich  
Switzerland

14<sup>th</sup> December 2016

**FIFA and football teams in West Bank settlements**

Dear Mr Infantino, Mr Gill and Mr Sexwale

As Members of the UK Parliament committed to the integrity of sport and fair play we are writing to ask you to resolve the situation of the six Israeli football clubs based in West Bank settlements without further delay.

United Nations resolutions and international law are clear that the settlements, built in the occupied Palestinian territory, are not part of Israel and that they are illegal. The six clubs based in these settlements also appear to violate FIFA's own statutes which forbid member associations from playing football on the territory of other member associations without their and FIFA's permission. Understandably, the Palestinian Football Association opposes the settlement clubs and has not agreed to them playing on its territory.

We believe that FIFA should keep football out of politics. To do so, FIFA has to follow its statutes and international law. Allowing the Israeli Football Association to extend its activities into the settlements in violation of those principles makes football part of the political conflict.

In the case of Crimea, FIFA banned the local football clubs from participating in the Russian league after the annexation of the peninsula in 2014. While no two situations are the same, FIFA should treat all cases on the basis of the same principles.

FIFA's recently increased emphasis on human rights is another reason for it stay out of settlements given their serious impact on Palestinian human rights, as widely

documented by the UN and civil society organisations.

For the above reasons, we join the recent calls by the Human Rights Watch, the UN advisor for sports Wilfried Lemke, and 66 Members of the European Parliament who have all urged FIFA to resolve the situation in accordance with its statutes and international law. This means that the settlement clubs should either relocate inside Israel's internationally recognised borders or create a separate football competition outside of the Israeli league, as is the case in other non-recognised territories around the world.

We support the right of all Israelis and Palestinians to play football, on the basis of the established rules. People must be allowed to play football in all situations – including in illegal settlements while the conflict continues – but that should happen outside of FIFA and its member associations.

We urge you to resolve the issue of the football clubs in settlements, at the latest, at the next FIFA Council meeting on 9-10 January 2017. This dispute has been allowed to drag on for too long. Putting an end to it by enforcing FIFA's rules in a transparent manner will be a boost for FIFA as it tries to embark on a new future.

Yours sincerely

Tommy Sheppard MP  
Martyn Day MP  
George Kerevan MP  
Douglas Chapman MP  
Alan Brown MP  
Margaret Ferrier MP  
Drew Hendry MP  
Andy Slaughter MP  
Richard Burden MP  
Kate Hollern MP  
Kate Osamor MP  
Helen Goodman MP  
Lord Kilclooney of Armagh  
Debbie Abrahams MP  
Baroness Tonge  
Rt. Hon. Lord Cope of Berkeley  
Graham Jones MP  
Lord Ahmed of Rotherham  
Stephen Kinnock MP  
Lisa Nandy MP

Martin Docherty MP  
Mark Durkan MP  
Caroline Lucas MP  
Philippa Whitford MP  
Mark Williams MP  
Lord Alderdice  
Flick Drummond MP  
Kelvin Hopkins MP  
Baroness Janke  
Julie Cooper MP  
Lord Warner  
Lord Judd  
Mark Hendrick MP  
Ruth Cadbury MP  
Natalie McGarry MP  
Simon Danczuk MP  
Lord Hylton  
Clive Betts MP

Cc:

Minister for the Middle East Tobias Ellwood  
Tracey Couch, Minister for Sport, Tourism and Heritage