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Association Européenne pour La Défense des Droits et des Libertés (ASSEDEL)
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Subject: Urgent Complaint Concerning Alleged Human Rights Violations, Discriminatory Treatment and Attacks on Human Dignity Affecting World Cup Participants

Dear President Infantino,

ASSEDEL (Association for Sustainable Development, Equality and Liberty) expresses its profound concern and indignation regarding credible reports indicating that members of the national football delegations of Uzbekistan and Senegal were subjected to exceptionally intrusive, degrading and discriminatory security procedures upon their arrival in the United States for the FIFA World Cup 2026.

Reports on what happened have rapidly attracted international attention, showing how players and officials were treated in a manner fundamentally inconsistent with the principles of equality, dignity and non-discrimination that FIFA publicly claims to uphold. Similar concerns have also emerged in the past with the exploitation of migrant workers within the kafala system in the 2022 FIFA World Cup; but have also emerged regarding the current World Cup in relation to other participants and FIFA-appointed officials, as the incidents involving Iraqi and Iranian representatives and the exclusion of a Somali FIFA referee despite holding valid travel documentation.

Whether these actions were carried out by governmental authorities, contracted security personnel or border-control agencies is not the central issue. The central issue is that these events occurred within the operational environment of a FIFA World Cup and directly affected individuals participating in a competition organized under FIFA's authority and responsibility. FIFA cannot simultaneously claim leadership in the field of human rights while distancing itself from serious allegations of discriminatory treatment targeting athletes, officials and accredited participants involved in its flagship event.

Article 3 of the FIFA Statutes explicitly commits FIFA to respecting internationally recognized human rights and promoting their protection. FIFA's Human Rights Policy further aligns the organization with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, including the obligation to identify, prevent, mitigate and address adverse human rights impacts linked to its activities and business relationships.

The reports currently in the public domain raise serious concerns regarding potential violations of:

- Human dignity
- Equality before the law
- Freedom from discrimination based on nationality, ethnicity or origin
- The right to participate in cultural and sporting life without arbitrary interference
- FIFA's own commitments on human rights and anti-discrimination

The perception that athletes from African, Asian or Muslim-majority nations are being subjected to treatment fundamentally different from that applied to participants from other countries is profoundly damaging not only to those affected, but also to the credibility and integrity of FIFA itself.

Silence in the face of such allegations risks creating the impression that discriminatory practices are tolerated when politically convenient.

ASSEDEL therefore kindly requests that FIFA:

1. Opens an independent and transparent investigation into all reported incidents involving the delegations of Senegal and Uzbekistan
2. Examines whether similar incidents have affected other participating teams, officials, media representatives and accredited personnel
3. Publicly discloses the findings of such investigation
4. Clarifies what due diligence measures were undertaken by FIFA before awarding hosting responsibilities and before the commencement of the tournament
5. Establishes effective safeguards ensuring that no participant is subjected to discriminatory, humiliating or disproportionate treatment in connection with FIFA competitions
6. Provides access to FIFA's Human Rights Grievance Mechanism for all affected individuals and ensures that any substantiated harm is appropriately remedied

Football cannot claim to unite the world while some participants are treated as suspects because of their nationality, ethnicity, religion or passport.

Human dignity is not negotiable.

The FIFA World Cup must remain a symbol of equality among nations and peoples. Any practice that undermines this principle strikes at the very heart of the values that FIFA publicly professes to defend.

ASSEDEL expects a prompt public response and concrete action.

Respectfully,

Teoman Aydogan
Secretary General

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