The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Will Stage World Cup Despite Racist Incidents, FIFA Head Says

By The Moscow Times

October 27, 2013



LONDON — Russia will still stage the 2018 World Cup finals despite the continuing blight of racism in the country's soccer, FIFA president Sepp Blatter said Sunday.

Asked at a media roundtable if Russia risked losing the World Cup, Blatter replied: "We have never said we will take the competition out of the country. That is impossible.''

"Sporting boycotts are rarely a solution to any problem," he said. "But every country must follow the resolution taken by the FIFA Congress in Mauritius in May and have a zero-tolerance policy toward racism."

Manchester City's Ivorian midfielder Yaya Toure said last week that black players should consider boycotting the tournament after he was subjected to racist chants from CSKA Moscow fans during a Champions League match in Moscow.

It was at least the sixth racist incident in the last five years involving Russian fans.

Speaking the day after attending a gala dinner marking the 150th anniversary of the founding of the English Football Association, Blatter said the problem of Russian racism in soccer would be discussed at the next executive committee meeting in December.

FIFA general secretary Jerome Valcke said he would be speaking to Russian authorities about the problem during a scheduled visit to Moscow this week.

"We will go back to the executive committee and see exactly what the situation is in Russia and what the latest incidents have been," Blatter said.

Blatter said he was absolutely determined to stamp racism out of football but added that FIFA could not be the world's policeman.

"The committees responsible for enforcing discipline in a competition must follow FIFA's rules and apply a zero-tolerance policy when incidents of racism occur in matches they control," he said.

"We cannot go to a country or a society and tell them to stop, that is not FIFA's right. But we can stop it in soccer and the disciplinary committees have to impose suspensions or deduct points. We are dealing with actual problems, the problems of racism today."

Valcke told reporters that he would meet Alexei Sorkin, the chief executive of Russia's 2018 World Cup organizing committee, and said the topic of racism would be high on the agenda.

"Of course we can use sanctions, but there is also an education program in place in Russia and the Russian authorities and the local organizing committee are working together to try and solve this problem," he said.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/10/27/russia-will-stage-world-cup-despite-racist-incidents-fifa-head-says-a28976