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FIFA Completes Probe Into Bidding Process for 2018 World Cup in Russia

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An interior view shows the Otkrytie Arena, the home stadium of Spartak Moscow football club, in Moscow Aug. 27.

BERNE — FIFA ethics committee investigator Michael Garcia has completed his probe into the controversial bidding process for the 2018 and 2022 World Cups, awarded to Russia and Qatar, respectively, and handed in a 350-page report.

The report, which has not been made public, will be submitted to the ethics committee's adjudicatory chamber, headed by German judge Hans-Joachim Eckert, to decide on whether any wrongdoing was committed, soccer's governing body said Friday.

FIFA said they could not comment on when Eckert might reach his decision.

During the course of the year-long investigation, Garcia and his deputy Cornel Borbely interviewed "more than 75 witnesses and compiled a record that, in addition to audio recordings from interviews, includes more than 200,000 pages of relevant material," FIFA said.

"The report sets forth detailed factual findings; reaches conclusions concerning further action with respect to certain individuals; identifies issues to be referred to other FIFA committees; and makes recommendations for future bidding processes."

The hosting rights for the two tournaments were awarded simultaneously by FIFA's executive committee in Zurich in 2010 after a turbulent campaign.

Spain/Portugal, Belgium/Netherlands and England had also been bidding for 2018 while U.S., Australia, South Korea and Japan had bid for 2022.

The executive committee which took the decision was reduced to 22 members instead of the usual 24 after two of them were suspended by the ethics committee one month before the vote.

Nigerian Amos Adamu was banned for breaches of five articles of FIFA's ethics code including one on bribery and Reynald Temarii of Tahiti for breaching articles on general conduct and loyalty.

The case followed allegations by The Sunday Times that the pair offered to sell their votes to undercover reporters posing as lobbyists for an American consortium.

FIFA said that all bidding nations were interviewed during the investigation. Borbely took responsibility obtaining information from the U.S and Russia as Garcia is a national of the former and was barred from visiting the latter.

Shortly before this year's World Cup in Brazil, The Sunday Times reported that some of the "millions of documents" it had seen linked payments by former FIFA executive committee member Mohamed Bin Hammam to officials to win backing for Qatar's World Cup bid.

Bin Hammam has not commented on his involvement since he was banned for life from soccer in 2012 and Qatar has denied all allegations of corruption.

Qatar has also been criticized for its alleged treatment of migrant workers in the construction industry.

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