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FIFA Official Wants Russia World Cup Bidding Probe Made Public

By The Moscow Times

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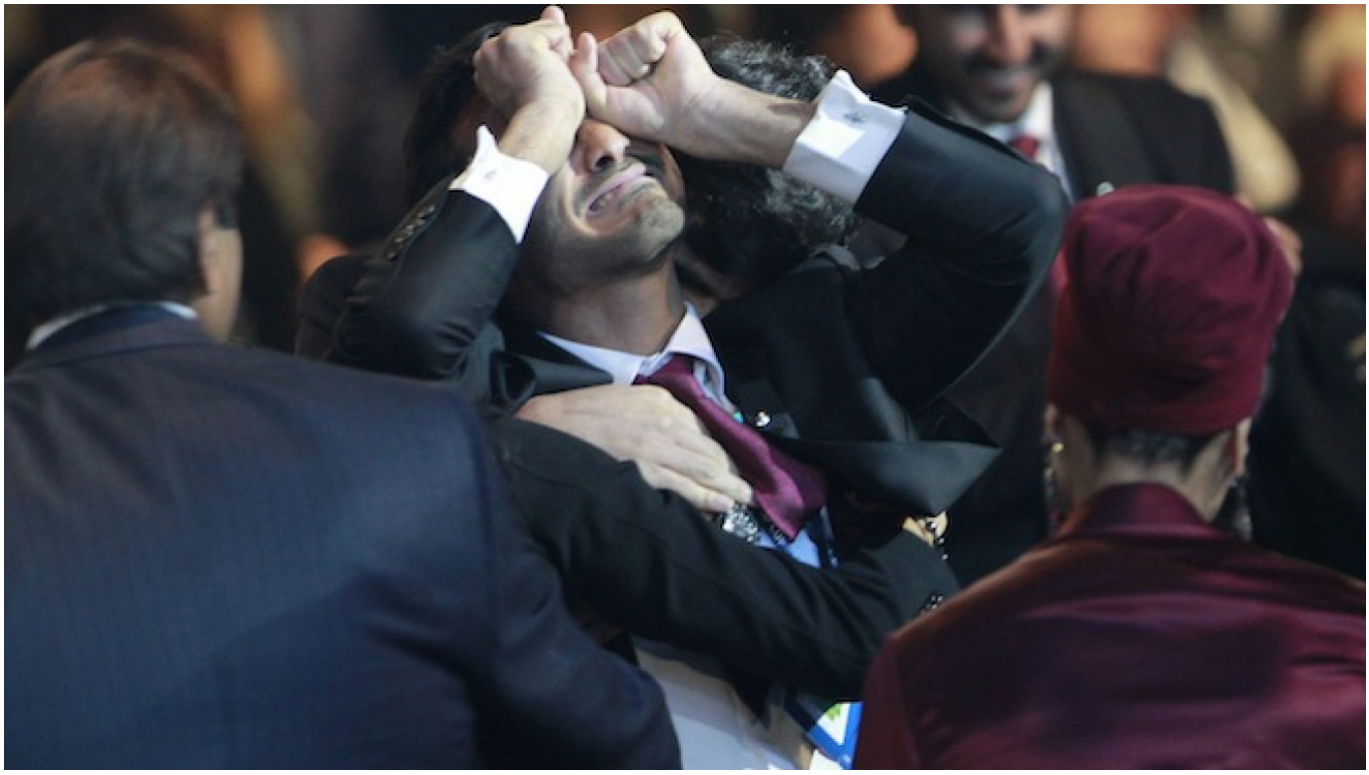

Members of Qatar's delegation react after the announcement that Qatar is going to be host nation for the FIFA World Cup 2022, in Zurich, December 2, 2010.

BERNE — The public has a "full right to know" the contents of the ethics investigation into the bidding process for the Russia 2018 and Qatar 2022 world cups, FIFA executive committee member Prince Ali bin Al Hussein of Jordan has said.

"In the interest of full transparency, I believe it is important that the much-anticipated report on the ethics investigation that is crucial to ensuring good governance at FIFA is fully disclosed and open to the public," he said Tuesday on Twitter.

"This will only help the football community move ahead in reforming our institutions in the best interest of the sport," added Prince Ali, who is the Asian vice-president on the executive committee.

"The entire football family as well as its sponsors and those who follow the game worldwide have a full right to know the contents of the report in the spirit of complete openness."

FIFA's ethics committee is investigating whether there was any corruption in the turbulent bidding process four years ago which ended in the 2018 World Cup being awarded to Russia and the 2022 tournament to Qatar.

Former U.S. attorney Michael Garcia, FIFA's ethics investigator, recently completed his report but it has not been made public.

It is now being scrutinized by German judge Hans-Joachim Eckert who heads the adjudicatory chamber of FIFA's ethics committee.

A final decision is not due until the spring and even then FIFA's ethics code, under a section entitled "confidentiality," states that "only the final decisions already notified to the addressees may be made public."

On Friday, Garcia himself criticized the lack of transparency surrounding his investigation, adding that he was restricted by the code as to what he could make public.

"As a general matter, I think that the more that is public and the more that people can see what is done and agree with what was done, or disagree with what is done ... then those issues can be resolved and the organization can move on," he said during a conference on sports in ethics held at FIFA headquarters.

"Beyond any particular case, the public have to have confidence that the process is working in a fair way."

Russia was awarded the right to stage the 2018 World Cup ahead of England as well as Spain-Portugal and Belgium-Netherlands, which submitted joint bids to host the tournament.

Qatar beat off competition from Australia, Japan, South Korea and the U.S. and will host the competition in 2022.

Material from The Moscow Times was included in this report.

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