The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

U.S. Senator Wants Public Report Into Bidding Process for Russia, Qatar World Cups

October 03, 2014



A girl plays with an inflated football ball outside Otkrytie Arena stadium in Moscow.

WASHINGTON — A senior U.S. senator has called for an investigative report into bidding for football's 2018 Russia and 2022 Qatar World Cups to be made public, adding to a growing chorus from inside and outside FIFA, the sport's world governing body, for its release.

"The lack of transparency regarding a corruption investigation is troubling," Senator Bob Casey, a Pennsylvania Democrat and chairman of a Senate employment subcommittee, wrote Thursday to FIFA President Sepp Blatter.

Michael Garcia, a former U.S. attorney, is investigating the turbulent bidding process four years ago that ended in the 2018 World Cup being awarded to Russia and the 2022 tournament to Qatar.

FIFA and Qatar World Cup organizers have been fending off allegations of corruption ever

since the Gulf state was awarded the tournament. Qatar has also been criticized over its treatment of migrant workers who work in the construction industry. Qatar has denied the allegations.

Casey had previously called on FIFA to move the tournament from Qatar over labor practices in that country.

"I urge FIFA to make public Mr. Garcia's entire investigative report and that any wrongdoing be swiftly addressed, especially if there is evidence that the vote for the 2022 World Cup was tainted and disadvantaged the U.S. bid," Casey wrote.

The U.S. bid to host the 2022 World Cup, but FIFA selected Qatar.

Last Friday, Blatter side-stepped demands for the report to be made public, although several FIFA executive committee members have called for its release and Garcia himself also said it should be published.

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