

Disgraced FIFA Head Blatter to Accept Putin's World Cup Invite

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Joseph Blatter and Vladimir Putin (Alexander Kulebyakin / Interpress / TASS)

Disgraced former FIFA president Sepp Blatter said he will come to Russia for the 2018 FIFA World Cup at the invitation of Russian President Vladimir Putin, in spite of a six-year ban from football-related activities, the AFP news agency reported on Friday.

“I will go to the World Cup in Russia,” Blatter told AFP. “I received an invitation from President Putin.”

Blatter was at the head of the world’s football governing body for 17 years, including in 2010 when Russia won the right to host the 2018 World Cup, and Qatar was controversially picked to host the 2022 tournament.

He was ousted in 2015 following a corruption scandal. The FIFA ethics committee subsequently banned him from the sport for eight years, but the term was reduced to six years after an appeal.

The ban, however, has not deterred Blatter from planning a trip to Russia when the country hosts the World Cup next summer.

“I don’t know how long I will go for, whether I will be there for the opening match or the final,” Blatter said. “Because I can’t work in football and I don’t have an assignment to do, maybe I will only make a short visit.”

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