

# HRW Fears Labor Abuses as Russia's World Cup Looms

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**Kiselyov Sergei / Moskva News Agency**

Tight deadlines at 2018 World Cup construction sites are putting workers at a greater risk of abuse as Russia nears the 200-day countdown to the international football tournament, Human Rights Watch has [warned](#).

FIFA has acknowledged the problem in the recently published report by its own Human Rights Advisory Board, but HRW claims that the worldwide football governing body has not done enough to protect workers.

“With the countdown to the June 2018 tournament in Russia underway, and with serious abuses occurring, FIFA’s human rights publications are piling up, but the human rights progress is not,” Minky Worden, director of global initiatives at HRW, said in a statement released prior to Sunday’s 200-day countdown to the opening World Cup match.

“With construction in Russia entering the crucial final phases, the risk is that danger to

workers will escalate with companies taking hazardous shortcuts or forcing workers to work around the clock,” Worden added.

In June, HRW released a report titled “Red Card,” which chronicled how workers at six World Cup stadiums were not paid wages and forced to work in unsafe conditions.

At least 20 workers have died at the 2018 World Cup stadium sites, the Building and Woodworkers International (BWI) global trade union reported.

There were also [reports](#) that Russian organizers used forced laborers from North Korea to finish the St. Petersburg Arena ahead of the 2017 Confederations Cup.

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Two people who have spoken out about the abuses, a Human Rights Watch researcher in Volgograd and a journalist in Kaliningrad, have been detained by police.

Meanwhile, Russian tournament organizers have admitted that there are delays in building several World Cup stadiums, Sport Express news outlet [reported](#) on Thursday.

With the exception of the stadiums in the four cities that hosted the 2017 Confederations Cups, the playing fields for next summer’s tournament are still not ready. The stadium in Samara is the furthest behind schedule, but organizers said that the arena will be completed in time to hold test matches scheduled for spring.

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