The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

# Russia Bribed FIFA to Host World Cup, U.S. Says

April 07, 2020



FIFA officials received millions of dollars to vote for Russia to host the 2018 World Cup, the U.S. Justice Department said. **Kremlin.ru**

Russia bribed football officials for the right to host the 2018 FIFA World Cup, the U.S. Justice Department said Monday in the first explicit accusations of wrongdoing following years of suspicion.

FIFA has been dogged by claims of corruption since 2010, when the global football governing body voted to award the 2018 and 2022 World Cups to Russia and Qatar. Since the wide-ranging FIFA corruption scandal erupted in 2015, the U.S. government has accused a total of 45 people and various sports companies of more than 90 crimes and of paying or accepting more than $200 million in bribes.

**Related article**: Leaked Emails Claim to Show Russia's FIFA World Cup Bribery Scheme

Trinidad's long-serving FIFA official Jack Warner "was promised and received" bribe

payments totaling $5 million to vote for Russia, the U.S. Justice Department said in a superseding indictment. Guatemala's Rafael Salguero was promised a $1 million bribe to vote for Russia, according to the March 18 indictment unsealed in U.S. District Court in Brooklyn.

Salguero pleaded guilty to multiple corruption charges in 2016 and was banned from FIFA while Warner, who faces charges in the United States, is currently battling extradition to the U.S. from his native Trinidad.

The Kremlin on Tuesday denied that Russia won the World Cup hosting bid through bribes.

The U.S. indictment also said that a former Brazilian FIFA member and a late Paraguayan official received payment of bribes in exchange for voting for Qatar's bid.

"The profiteering and bribery in international soccer have been deep-seated and commonly known practices for decades," William F. Sweeney Jr, the assistant director in charge of the FBI's New York field office, said in a statement on Monday which announced the charges.

"Over a period of many years, the defendants and their co-conspirators corrupted the governance and business of international soccer with bribes and kickbacks, and engaged in criminal fraudulent schemes that caused significant harm to the sport," he said.

"Their schemes included the use of shell companies, sham consulting contracts and other concealment methods to disguise the bribes and kickback payments and make them appear legitimate."

Vyacheslav Koloskov, the honorary president of Russia's Football Union, dismissed the charges and said they came too late.

"The World Cup has been over for two years now. Those who need to have read this [indictment] and forgotten about it," he told Russia's Championat.com sports news website.

*AFP contributed reporting to this article.*

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/04/07/russia-bribed-fifa-to-host-world-cup-us-says-a69897