



Unitatem et Libertas

Association of Iranian Human Rights & Allies

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Mr Gianni Infantino
FIFA-Strasse 20,
P.O. Box 8044,
Zurich, Switzerland

21st May 2026

Subject: Urgent Request to Reverse the Decision to Ban the Historic Lion and Sun Flag at the 2026 FIFA World Cup

Dear Mr Infantino,

The Association of Iranian Human Rights and Allies writes to you as President of FIFA to express our deep concern and profound disappointment regarding the reported decision to ban the historic Lion and Sun flag of Iran from the 2026 FIFA World Cup. We respectfully but firmly urge you to reverse this policy without delay.

The Lion and Sun is one of the oldest and most revered symbols of Iranian cultural heritage. Recognised for centuries as an emblem of Persian identity, pride, and historical continuity, it long predates the current political system. For millions of Iranians both inside the country and in the diaspora, it represents national unity and cultural belonging rather than any partisan political position. By prohibiting this flag, FIFA does not achieve neutrality. Instead, it effectively grants exclusive recognition to the symbols of the current regime and silences the cultural expression of a vast number of Iranians.

FIFA has repeatedly declared its dedication to keeping football free from politics, while championing human rights, inclusion, and respect for cultural diversity. This decision appears to contradict those stated principles. Yielding to pressure from the Islamic Republic's football federation risks portraying FIFA as complicit in the suppression of peaceful voices and as favouring an authoritarian regime that faces widespread international criticism for its human rights record. This is not neutrality. It is a political choice that undermines the integrity of the organisation and the spirit of the World Cup.

Such a ban is unworthy of a global body that presents itself as a force for unity and good. It brings shame to the beautiful game by prioritising political appeasement over the legitimate cultural rights of fans. Observers and supporters worldwide already regard this move as inconsistent and unjust, particularly when FIFA has shown flexibility toward other historical and cultural symbols in the past.

We therefore call upon you personally, Mr Infantino, to demonstrate genuine leadership. Reverse this misguided decision immediately and confirm that Iranian fans will be permitted to display the Lion and Sun flag peacefully at the 2026 World Cup. This action would reaffirm FIFA's commitment to all fans, respect for cultural heritage, and the principle that football belongs to the people, not to regimes.

Iran is not defined solely by its current government. Its people and its fans deserve the freedom to celebrate their rich heritage without censorship in the stadiums of the world's greatest sporting event.

We look forward to your prompt and positive response on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Nazak Tavakoli

Mr Afshin Payravi

Directors of Association of Iranian Human Rights and Allies