



Matthew Mullen

Head of Human Rights, FIFA World Cup
matthew.mullen@fwc2026.org

Dear Matthew Mullen,

The World Cup is a powerful example of how sports can bring people from around the world together through a shared love of soccer. That shared love is visible in the fans who fill the stands, the workers who staff the stadium, and the players who bring the game to life. We see this in real time through videos on social media and news coverage from across North America and globally, which make clear that the tournament's energy

comes from the people. This matters because FIFA often centers the institution, corporate sponsors, and marketing campaigns, even though the event depends on the people who make it possible.

FIFA and its corporate partners, including Hyundai-Kia, stand to profit from people's love of soccer and the global attention surrounding the World Cup. FIFA is expected to make a record-breaking [\\$2.8 billion](#) through corporate sponsorships alone, with researchers estimating that media engagement can increase incremental sales via paid marketing by an additional 2%-6% for corporate sponsors.¹

These projected financial gains stand in sharp contrast to FIFA's limited action to protect human rights, worker health and safety, communities, and the environment. [Despite advocates' efforts to engage FIFA](#) in creating a comprehensive human rights plan that protects workers and communities across supply chains, FIFA has failed to commit to meaningful corporate accountability.²

We call on FIFA, host committees, and local organizing entities, including LASEC, to take concrete action. Specifically, FIFA must address the following human rights, labor, and environmental concerns before future games:

Protect Human and Labor Rights

No Comprehensive Human Rights Plan

Sporting mega-events, like the World Cup, are associated with increased risks of labor exploitation, human trafficking, and other human rights violations. As Sunita Jain Anti-Trafficking Initiative explained in its report, [Preventing and Addressing Human Trafficking Related to Major Sporting Events in Los Angeles: Recommendations for the 2026 World Cup and 2028 Olympics](#), these risks are connected to large-scale infrastructure projects, temporary labor needs, recruitment abuses, wage theft, unsafe working conditions, and weak oversight.³

FIFA had a responsibility to ensure that host cities and host committees developed comprehensive human rights plans early, publicly, and with input from local communities and experts, and with concrete steps to prevent harm. This World Cup was an important opportunity to include plans addressing labor exploitation and human trafficking, risks that are often discussed around major sporting events but too often left out of prevention planning.

Yet the Los Angeles Host Committee's Human/Civil Rights Approach, released on May 1, came too late for communities, workers, service providers, survivor leaders, and other experts to meaningfully review it or

¹ Fernanda Tronco and Celine Provini, "Why Brands Are Spending Billions on 2026 FIFA World Cup," TheStreet, June 15, 2026, <https://www.thestreet.com/entertainment/brands-spending-billions-2026-fifa-world-cup-2-8-billion>.

² Libby Rainey, "A Month out from World Cup, LA Advocates Say Human Rights Are an Afterthought," Explore LA, *LAist*, May 12, 2026,

<https://laist.com/news/los-angeles-activities/world-cup-la-advocates-say-human-rights-are-an-afterthought>. <https://laist.com/news/los-angeles-activities/world-cup-la-advocates-say-human-rights-are-an-afterthought> Rainey, "A Month out from World Cup, LA Advocates Say Human Rights Are an Afterthought."

³ Sunita Jain Anti-Trafficking Initiative (SJI), *Preventing and Addressing Human Trafficking Related to Major Sporting Events in Los Angeles: Recommendations for the 2026 World Cup and 2028 Olympics* (Loyola Law School, 2025), <https://www.lls.edu/media/loyolalawschool/academics/clinicexperientiallearning/sji/publicationsandreports/procurement/majorsportingevents/Preventing%20and%20Addressing%20Human%20Trafficking%20Related%20to%20Major%20Sporting%20Events.pdf>. <https://www.lls.edu/media/loyolalawschool/academics/clinicexperientiallearning/sji/publicationsandreports/procurement/majorsportingevents/Preventing%20and%20Addressing%20Human%20Trafficking%20Related%20to%20Major%20Sporting%20Events.pdf> Sunita Jain Anti-Trafficking Initiative (SJI), *Preventing and Addressing Human Trafficking Related to Major Sporting Events in Los Angeles: Recommendations for the 2026 World Cup and 2028 Olympics*.

provide feedback. Although the document named risks related to human rights, labor exploitation, and trafficking, it did not provide concrete prevention plans, dedicated funding, implementation timelines, or clear accountability measures.

FIFA and its corporate sponsors have the resources to fund these protections. In its report, the Sunita Jain Anti-Trafficking Initiative recommended approximately \$3 million in dedicated funding for worker outreach, multilingual know-your-rights materials, survivor- and worker-informed planning, community-based services, reporting mechanisms, independent monitoring, and evaluation. The Host Committee's approach, however, does not identify dedicated funding for these safeguards or explain who is responsible for paying for them. Without dedicated funding, human rights commitments remain aspirational rather than actionable.

The Host Committee's approach also offered limited transparency about implementation and did not show genuine collaboration with local communities. This lack of transparency left advocates trying to understand the respective roles of FIFA, the Host Committee, and LASEC, and how these entities intended to carry out their [responsibilities](#).⁴

These important issues could have been identified and addressed earlier if FIFA, host committees, and local organizing entities had made these plans public long before the games and provided adequate time to engage workers, advocates, service providers, survivor leaders, and community experts in the planning process.

FIFA's Collaboration with ICE

[Over 120 civil society groups](#) have issued warnings to visitors about Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activity during the World Cup games.⁵ Yet, FIFA has continued to [collaborate with the Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\)](#), the federal agency that houses ICE.⁶ While the Trump administration has only given belated assurances that no mass immigration enforcement raids will happen in the stadiums during games, they have not ruled out other enforcement activities, such as [targeted arrests](#). Additionally, FIFA is requiring stadium workers to disclose sensitive personal data such as [Social Security Numbers](#), and is in turn [sharing this data](#) with the FBI.⁷ The FBI has called the DHS a "key partner" in conducting name checks for the World Cup. If they should change their mind about immigration enforcement at the stadiums, the federal government now has workers' sensitive personal data provided by FIFA. Since January 2025, ICE has torn apart hundreds of thousands of families and neglect in ICE detention facilities has left at least [50 people](#) dead.⁸ FIFA has a responsibility to protect its stadium workers covering the games.

⁴ "FIFA Publishes Landmark Human Rights Policy," accessed July 8, 2026, <https://inside.fifa.com/organisation/news/origin1904-p.cxm.fifa.com/fifa-publishes-landmark-human-rights-policy-2893311>.

⁵ Claire Wang, "We Want Fans to Know the Risks: US Immigrant Rights Groups Mobilize across World Cup Host Cities amid ICE Fears," US News, *The Guardian*, June 1, 2026, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/jun/01/ice-fifa-world-cup-immigrant-rights>.

⁶ "FIFA President Meets Members of the United States Departments of State and Homeland Security," accessed July 8, 2026, <https://inside.fifa.com/organisation/president/news/origin1904-p.cxm.fifa.com/fifa-president-meets-members-of-the-united-states-departments-of-state-and-homeland-security>.

⁷ Adam Crafton, "SoFi Stadium Workers' Union Complains about FIFA to California Attorney General," *The New York Times*, May 8, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/7261918/2026/05/08/sofi-union-workers-union-complaint-fifa/>; "Statement of Special Agent in Charge Douglas Olson to the Senate Appropriations Committee," Testimony, Federal Bureau of Investigation, accessed July 8, 2026, <https://www.fbi.gov/news/speeches-and-testimony/statement-of-special-agent-in-charge-douglas-olson-to-senate-appropriations>.

⁸ Ted Hesson et al., "Death Rate in ICE Immigrant Detention Centers More than Doubles under Trump, Reuters Analysis Finds," Government, *Reuters*, June 17, 2026, <https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/death-rate-ice-immigrant-detention-centers-more-than-doubles-under-trump-reuters-2026-06-17/>.

Mitigate Climate Impacts

Most Polluting World Cup in History

FIFA previously [committed](#) to halving its carbon emissions by 2030 and going net zero by 2040.⁹ Yet the 2026 World Cup will be the [most polluting sports tournament in history](#) due in part to the games spanning three countries and more teams traveling from around the world to play in the tournament.¹⁰ This World Cup takes place only in North America, but the next World Cup will span three continents. As the scale of these games contrasts sharply with FIFA's commitments, FIFA must take real action to mitigate climate-warming emissions.

Ensure Corporate Sponsor Accountability

Hyundai-Kia

Hyundai-Kia is a [major sponsor and partner](#) of the FIFA 2026 World Cup and is also the [Official Mobility Partner](#), announcing in June that it would be deploying its largest-ever tournament fleet of 994 passenger vehicles and 506 buses.¹¹ Despite Hyundai-Kia's sophisticated marketing campaign, there are serious human, labor, and environmental concerns in the company's supply chain.

International

Hyundai-Kia Supplier Ternium and Allegations of Forced Disappearances: Hyundai [sources](#) iron ore from the Ternium Iron Ore Mines in Mexico.¹² Locals claim the mines are polluting local waterways and harming wildlife. Indigenous leaders and advocates who oppose the mines may have become targets for the cartels. [In recent years](#), more than half a dozen people who had challenged Ternium's mines have allegedly been kidnapped, murdered, or disappeared.¹³ Most recently, in January 2023, Antonio Díaz Valencia, a community leader in San Miguel de Aquila, Michoacán, and Ricardo Lagunes, a human rights defender and attorney advising the community, were [allegedly kidnapped](#) and have still not been found.¹⁴ [Journalists allege](#) a cartel member told police that he had helped abduct the pair because they were causing problems with the mines.¹⁵ Activists have pushed Hyundai to engage with impacted community members repeatedly, with protesters in [Guadalajara](#) recently demanding Hyundai engage their supplier Ternium to adequately address the steelmaker's role in the case.¹⁶

Additionally, [research based on 2023](#) data found that Ternium was one of the companies emitting the most lead, cadmium, and arsenic in its home state of Nuevo León, and that Ternium also emits unsafe

⁹ "Green Card for the Planet," accessed July 8, 2026, <https://inside.fifa.com/sustainability/green-card>.

¹⁰ "FIFA World Cup: Climate Is The Loser - Highest Impact Ever," accessed July 8, 2026, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/we-dont-have-time/2026/06/11/fifa-world-cup-climate-is-the-loser-highest-impact-ever/>.

¹¹ "Hyundai x FIFA World Cup | Official Partner | Hyundai USA," accessed July 8, 2026, <https://www.hyundaiusa.com/us/en/fifa>; "Hyundai Motor Announces Largest-Ever Mobility and Robotics Deployment for FIFA World Cup™ | Hyundai Motor Group," accessed July 8, 2026, <https://www.hyundaimotorgroup.com/en/news/hyundai-motor-announces-largest-ever-mobility-and-robotics-deployment-for-fifa-world-cup>.

¹² *Tainted Steel: The Deadly Consequences of Hyundai's Dirty Steel Supply Chain* (Mighty Earth, 2025), <https://mightyearth.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Tainted-Steel-Hyundai-Report-For-Release-01312025.pdf>.

¹³ "Blood and Ore: Mexican Cartel Violence Silences Mine Opponents," OCCRP, accessed July 8, 2026, <https://www.occrp.org/en/feature/blood-and-ore-mexican-cartel-violence-silences-mine-opponents>.

¹⁴ OCCRP, "Blood and Ore."

¹⁵ OCCRP, "Blood and Ore."

¹⁶ "Manifestantes en Guadalajara acusan a patrocinador del Mundial de 'lavar su imagen' con la Copa del Mundo; planean protestas en L.A.," Los Angeles Times en Español, June 20, 2026, <https://www.latimes.com/espanol/deportes/articulo/2026-06-19/manifestantes-en-guadalajara-acusan-patrocinador-del-mundial-de-lavar-su-imagen-con-la-copa-del-mundo-planean-protestas-en-la>.

levels of other pollutants.¹⁷ Communities near its facilities are experiencing serious health problems, including developmental issues related to [elevated levels of lead](#) in the bloodstream.¹⁸ In response, communities in Monterrey [held a protest](#) on Ternium Steels public health and climate impacts.¹⁹

National

Child Labor in Hyundai-Kia's US Supply Chain

Between 2020 and 2022, federal and state investigators, along with investigative journalists, uncovered children as young as 13 illegally employed in at least [nine Hyundai-Kia suppliers](#) in Alabama.²⁰ Over this two-year period, federal and state investigations documented 15 distinct cases, resulting in more than \$447,000 in fines against five staffing agencies and three manufacturing companies.

Hyundai-Kia US Supply Chain Risks Worker Health and Safety

Companies within the Hyundai-Kia U.S. supply chain have repeatedly failed to meet federal occupational health and safety standards enforced by the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to protect workers from known hazards that can cause injury, illness, and death.²¹

The hundreds of OSHA citations issued across the Hyundai-Kia supply chain document specific incidents and conditions that placed workers in harm's way, each representing a failure with direct human consequence. Between 2015 and 2025, twelve workers have died in incidents at companies that are part of Hyundai-Kia's U.S. supply chain. Additionally, in 2024 alone, employers within the Hyundai-Kia supply chain self-reported more than 1,000 workplace injuries and illnesses.²² Many of these incidents stemmed from preventable causes.

Additionally, in August 2025, federal agents detained over 470 foreign subcontracted workers at the Hyundai-LG Energy Solution battery plant under construction in Ellabell, Georgia. The raid was the largest immigration enforcement action in a U.S. manufacturing facility in decades.²³ These workers, employed through multiple layers of subcontractors and staffing intermediaries, were reported to have been recruited outside legal visa parameters and paid below prevailing wages.²⁴

Other Sponsorships

Advocates are not just raising the alarm about Hyundai-Kia. Other corporate sponsors of the World Cup like

¹⁷ "Ternium Pesquería Steel Plant," Banktrack, accessed July 8, 2026, https://www.banktrack.org/project/ternium_pesqueria_steel_plant.

¹⁸ David Cázares, "Plomo de zonas industriales envenena a 3 de cada 10 niños en NL," *elhorizonte*, April 20, 2026, <https://www.elhorizonte.mx/nuevoleon/plomo-de-zonas-industriales-envenena-a-3-de-cada-10-ninos-en-nl/9799471325>.

¹⁹ Zachary Hansen, Lautaro Grinspan, "Unprecedented Immigration Raid at Hyundai EV Site Leads to 475 Arrests," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, September 25, 2025, <https://www.ajc.com/business/2025/09/475-arrested-in-unprecedented-immigration-raid-at-georgias-hyundai-ev-site/>.

²⁰ *Hidden in Plain Sight: Safety, Labor, and Environmental Violations Driving Hyundai-Kia's Supply Chain* (Jobs to Move America, 2025), https://recallinjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/JMA_RIHK_REPORT_V4_111425.pdf.

²¹ "Worker Rights and Protections | Occupational Safety and Health Administration," accessed July 8, 2026, <https://www.osha.gov/workers>.

²² Occupational Safety and Health Administration, "2024 Injury Tracking Application Case Detail Data," 2024.

²³ "USA: Over 450 Mostly South Korean Migrant Workers Detained at Hyundai-LG EV Manufacturing Plant, Georgia's 'Largest Economic Development Project'; Incl. Co. Comments," *Business and Human Rights Centre*, accessed July 8, 2026,

<https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/us-475-mostly-south-koreans-detained-in-largest-ever-immigration-raid-at-hyundai-lg-battery-plant-in-georgia/>.

²⁴ Zachary Hansen, Lautaro Grinspan, "Unprecedented Immigration Raid at Hyundai EV Site Leads to 475 Arrests."

[Saudi Aramco](#), [Home Depot](#), and [Airbnb](#) have also been at the center of community concerns around human, environmental and labor rights²⁵.

Demands

- ❖ ***We call on FIFA to require all host cities and host committees to publish comprehensive, publicly available, and fully funded human rights plans well before future games.***
 - *These plans must include concrete prevention strategies, clear timelines, community oversight, meaningful local collaboration, and dedicated funding to prevent and respond to labor exploitation, human trafficking, and other human rights harms across supply chains.*

- ❖ ***We call on FIFA to ensure that its corporate sponsors and their suppliers are aligned with global standards outlining robust human rights and environmental due diligence practices.***

- ❖ ***We call on FIFA to ensure that its corporate sponsors respect human & labor rights as a condition of sponsorship, including demanding FIFA end its sponsorship agreement with Hyundai-Kia unless they address issues linked to their supply chain such as alleged forced disappearances of community activists involved in land rights disputes surrounding supplier mining operations, child labor violations, and preventable worker deaths.***

FIFA must go further and make real commitments to protect human rights, safeguard workers' health and safety across supply chains, and mitigate climate impact. The examples above highlight why FIFA's human rights commitments cannot stop at host cities or public-facing statements. FIFA gives its corporate sponsors a global platform and benefits from their financial support. In return, FIFA must require those sponsors to meet clear human rights, labor, and environmental standards across their operations and supply chains.

We call on FIFA to adopt enforceable corporate sponsor accountability requirements. If Hyundai-Kia, or other sponsors, fail to clean up their act, they should be dropped as World Cup sponsors. FIFA and its sponsors have a responsibility to protect the people and communities behind the game.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Gutierrez, Executive Director
Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice

Mike Miller, Director
UAW Region 6

Valerie Lizárraga, Assistant Director of Organizing & Policy
Jobs to Move America (JMA)

²⁵ UNITE HERE Local 11, "BREAKING NEWS: Fair Games Coalition Threatens Protests and Strikes During 2028 Olympic Games, Launches Campaign for New Deal for Our Future Outside LA Coliseum Olympic Torch," *UNITE HERE Local 11*, August 21, 2025, <https://www.unitehere11.org/breaking-news-fair-games-coalition-threatens-protests-and-strikes-during-2028-olympic-game-s-launches-campaign-for-new-deal-for-our-future-outside-la-coliseum-olympic-torch/>; More From This Press Contact Kayah Swanson, "Community and Environmental Groups File Lawsuit in Louisiana Challenging Controversial LNG Project | Sierra Club," August 21, 2024, <https://www.sierraclub.org/press-releases/2025/03/community-and-environmental-groups-file-lawsuit-louisiana-challenging>; "Boycott Home Depot - Protect Our Communities from ICE," Boycott Home Depot, October 14, 2025, <https://boycotthomedepot.network/>.

Abhilasha Bhola, Climate Campaigns Director
Public Citizen

Paloma Bustos, Policy Associate
LMU Sunita Jain Anti-Trafficking Initiative

Jessica Durrum, Deputy Director of Policy & Campaigns
Los Angeles Alliance for New Economy (LAANE)

Eddie Sanchez, Codirector
Southern California Coalition for Occupational Safety & Health (SoCalCOSH)

Irene Montantes, Founder
Los Angeles Baby Cooperative

Nancy Berlin, Tri-chair
California Poor People's Campaign

Jessica Martinez, Executive Director
National Council for Occupational Safety and Health (National COSH)

Sim-Marcel Bilal, Executive Director
Youth Climate Strike Los Angeles

Julia Figueira-McDonough, Associate Vice-President, Economic Justice
Bet Tzedek

Clio Byrne-Gudding, Organizer
Production Assistants United

Trina Traylor, Campaign & Coalition Manager
Los Angeles Black Worker Center

Alex Aguilar Jr., Business Manager & Secretary-Treasurer
LiUNA Local 724

Matthew Groch, Industrial Campaigns Director
Mighty Earth

Sergio Vargas, Co-Director
Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE)

Mickey Chavez, President
ILWU Southern California District Council