



Speak Out Now

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The World Cup Reflects the Common Struggles of Workers Everywhere

The 2026 World Cup finally kicked off across the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. It is the biggest sporting event on the planet, watched by billions, unified by their love for the game of soccer – the most popular sport in the world, a game that belongs to working class people everywhere. But wherever we look, that beauty has been stained by the corruption of FIFA – the international soccer federation that oversees the World Cup – and the racist practices of the U.S. government, who have organized this whole tournament in the interests of the rich and at the expense of working class fans.

This World Cup has the most expensive tickets of any tournament ever. FIFA has imposed so-called dynamic pricing, meaning costs rise with demand. The best seats for the final are on sale for nearly \$33,000. Affordable group-stage tickets are nearly impossible for ordinary fans to find, and the lucky few who got any likely paid several hundred dollars each. The result? Tens of thousands of tickets sat unsold days before the first kickoff, but rather than lower its prices and face refund demands from fans who paid full price, FIFA is dumping unsold seats onto resale sites at a discount, a scheme now being investigated for fraud.

Even getting to a match is a racket. New Jersey Transit announced it would charge fans \$150 for a round trip to MetLife Stadium, host of several games and the final, a ride that normally costs about \$13, before public outrage forced the fare down to around \$100. Hotels are gouging visitors. Parking and concessions cost a fortune. Ordinary supporters are shaken down at every step to getting a seat.

And, the U.S. government is using its hosting of this event to carry out open, racist exclusion. The Trump administration previously imposed travel bans on several countries that qualified for the tournament – including Ivory Coast, Haiti, Iran, and Senegal – meaning most, if not all, fans from these nations have been barred from attending matches on U.S. soil.

Iranian supporters who waited years to cheer on their team have had their visas denied on the ridiculous claim that Iranian fans pose a security threat because of the ongoing U.S. war on Iran. And, the Department of Homeland Security has put its agents in U.S. host cities, spreading fear and making immigrants think twice about leaving their homes near a city that is hosting matches.

And the exclusion reaches right onto the field. Iran's team has been forced to run its camp out of Tijuana,

Mexico because it is not allowed to operate its team camp inside the U.S. – they are only allowed to enter the U.S. for its games and must leave the country immediately after – and more than a dozen of its staff were denied visas days before kickoff. All because the U.S. military launched an unprovoked war on the people of Iran!

Omar Artan, Africa's referee of the year from Somalia, slated to officiate his first World Cup, was turned away at the border because Somalia is on Trump's racist travel ban list and he has been falsely linked to "terrorist activities." And FIFA has done nothing to defend these players and referees because FIFA's president, Gianni Infantino, likes his cozy relationship with Trump and supports this blatant display of the racism of society.

The World Cup is a reflection of the world we live in, where the interests of the rich come first and working people pay the price. All while the players and the thousands of workers behind the scenes working at the stadiums, hotels, in transportation, and more are the ones who make this World Cup happen. The same forces squeezing fans out of the stadiums are squeezing working people everywhere – inflicting ICE terror on our communities, and funneling wealth to billionaires and corporations, while waging wars that working people pay for in money and blood.

But the World Cup shows us something else too – something they can't sell and can't ban. For one month, billions of people across every border will watch the same matches, celebrate the same goals, and share the same joys and heartbreaks. Working class fans around the world will be united by something far deeper than anything that divides them. That is no small thing – it is a glimpse of the common interests of workers around the world.

Our real power lies in exactly that unity across borders. The billionaires and warmongers depend on keeping us divided by nationality, while they organize internationally to serve themselves. If working people can come together across every border for these games, we should be able to see the common interests of workers across borders too. The World Cup doesn't have to just be a time to celebrate our love of soccer, it can also be a reminder of the international working class and our common struggle against this capitalist system of exploitation.