***KNVB shared the following position statement with the Resource Centre in October 2021:***

The KNVB has never been in favour of holding the World Cup in Qatar and of course certainly doesn’t approve of the way in which migrant workers are and/or have been treated there. These practices are not limited exclusively to World Cup building projects, but happen in all large-scale construction projects. This is a wider problem, but at least it has now taken the spotlight in the run-up to the World Cup. At present, we as a football association have three options for dealing with this:

1. As a football association, we can focus on only the sports-related elements of this World Cup and leave all efforts to improve conditions in Qatar to social and political organisations. This is not an option for us.
2. One year before the event, we can, as some are suggesting, still decide to boycott the World Cup in Qatar. However, human rights organisations are not in favour of a boycott. They say that it would not exactly help the migrant workers in Qatar because they would lose their money. In addition, these human rights groups say that the envisaged reforms in Qatar will only take place if we attend, continue our involvement and exert pressure on the government in Qatar. In other words, a boycott will do nothing to improve the situation, which in our opinion, does not make it the best option either.
3. We can use the current spotlight on the World Cup and make our own contribution to efforts to improve the plight of migrant workers in Qatar. We can do this through diplomacy, by supporting projects for migrant workers and women in Qatar, and especially by continuing to demand attention from the government in Qatar. According to reports by human rights organisations, this strategy has recently produced certain improvements. This is therefore our preferred option, and we will step up our efforts in the coming period.

Abuses like these must never occur again at any future World Cup. In 2014, the KNVB was one of the initiators of attempts to move FIFA to pay more attention to human rights in countries bidding to hold the World Cup. Clear progress has since been made: bid procedures for upcoming World Cups now include a human rights paragraph. Unfortunately, this was not yet the case when Qatar was chosen, but after 2022 we will no longer have another World Cup in a country that doesn’t include international human rights guarantees in the bid procedure.

**Our general statement on the World Cup in Qatar**

From a sporting point of view, the World Cup represents the highest stage of football, for both the players and the millions of fans worldwide. The World Cup qualifying campaign has yet to start, but we are fully aware of the problems in Qatar and are helping to make and strengthen improvements. Football has the power to connect countries and peoples, enabling them to enter into dialogue on difficult issues - a process referred to as football diplomacy. This process facilitates international diplomacy and paves the way for discussion on issues such as human rights in places where it is urgent to do so.

* At the time of the bidding, the KNVB was not in favour of holding the World Cup in Qatar, but we now see the fact that the final tournament will take place there in 2022 as a given. We do not look away from the social problems of the host country and will – if we qualify - participate in the tournament in a socially responsible way. Reporting from human rights groups and international trade union umbrella organisations is very valuable in this light. It helps us. These reports are keeping us up to date on specific problems and with that information we can also enter into dialogue with our stakeholders.
* Within the world of football, the KNVB has been active in the field of human rights. The KNVB was one of the initiators of an appeal on FIFA to pay more attention to human rights in countries bidding to host the World Cup. Clear progress has been made in this area: there is now a so-called human rights paragraph on future bid procedures for the World Cup. This paragraph was not yet in place when Qatar was chosen, but with the World Cup hosts firmly in the spotlight, the situation of migrant workers in Qatar has been identified, discussed and also improved on a number of points, according to earlier reports.
* Together with other federations, the Royal Netherlands Football Association is part of the international football community and all FIFA members have committed themselves to participating in World Cup qualifying campaigns and, after qualification, also in the World Cup finals. Since the Second World War, not a single World Cup final tournament has been boycotted for political reasons by any country. Precisely because of the World Cup, many people are now closely watching the situation in Qatar, which goes beyond this tournament. Thanks to the global attention and diplomatic efforts, progress is being made to improve the situation of workers in Qatar. A sports boycott would not help achieve (further) progress, as human rights organisations have also pointed out.
* With regard to the upcoming World Cup in Qatar, the KNVB is in close contact with the Dutch embassy there as well as human rights organisations and, at home, with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

We are using our football to work for change in Qatar. Together, because 'Football supports change'.

**International Working Group**

The Netherlands football team introduced 'Football Supports Change' at the start of the 2022 World Cup qualifiers. Their key message: the situation of migrant workers in the World Cup host country, Qatar, needs to change. Football Supports Change' has now become a wider plan that has entered a new phase involving administrative diplomacy and talks with Qatar authorities and others.

Together with England, France, Germany, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland and recently also Norway, the Netherlands is participating in a dedicated UEFA working group that focuses on migrant workers’ rights in Qatar in cooperation with FIFA. After a series of meetings in Qatar this working group has drawn up a number of preliminary recommendations, including minimum standards for European countries taking part in the World Cup to adopt for any supplier agreement in Qatar. This will benefit the rights of migrant workers. Below a summary of the recommendations:

* Firstly looking to recommended minimum standards for federations to adopt for any supplier agreement in Qatar. This will include the suggestion that associations should request that any supplier contracted for services in Qatar should have strong consultation with their workers, through committees and workforce forums – this is an initiative already started by the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy and that has been taken on by the government in the form of 'joint committees' demonstrating the impact of the World Cup.
* A second recommendation focuses on the confirmation of further visits to Qatar, to strengthen the exchange and collaboration with the organisers and local organisations. This would focus on supporting sustainable development, while also ensuring that the European football community can have a direct channel to information and updates on the situation and development within Qatar and the region.
* As a final suggestion, the working group would like to initiate a review of how football might be able to support the establishment of workers’ rights centres in Qatar. These workers’ rights centres would aim to ensure that services and training continue to stand available to migrant workers after the World Cup has been hosted.
* In addition, the working group also identified the need of engaging European media in future visits, to further provide a direct insight into the progress made over the last years. It is believed this would be key to bridge identified gaps in information, and ensure there is dialogue between institutions on site and the media channels connected to European football.
* The working group acknowledges the standard of workers’ welfare for workers on Supreme Committee projects, and any support that third parties have provided in that respect. It recognises the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy as well as the Qatar Football Association as partners working toward potential implementation of any recommendation and as the direct relationship holders for discussion of recommendations with UEFA in Qatar.

**Sustainable improvements**

The goal of all these efforts is to achieve significant and lasting improvements in the conditions of migrant workers in Qatar. For this reason, football is being used to accelerate the desired changes: 'Football Supports Change'. In the run-up to the World Cup, the pressure appears to be working, as Qatar has shown progress over the past three years when it comes to the situation of its migrant workers. Certainly in comparison to the region. However, much of this progress is still on paper; the work is not done until these changes are implemented in the workplace.

More information can be found through; [KNVB en het WK in Qatar | KNVB](https://www.knvb.nl/info/62149/knvb-en-het-wk-qatar) and [The KNVB and the World Cup in Qatar | KNVB](https://www.knvb.com/info/1151/knvb-and-world-cup-qatar)