



Who Can Be Trusted?

Fake News and the FIFA 2022 World
Cup Media Coverage



Figure 1

*"A lie can travel around the world and back again
while the truth is lacing up its boots."*

Mark Twain



*“We Will
Stand On
Principle Or
We Will Not
Stand At All.”*



Margaret Thatcher

Founding President, The Bruges Group

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About

the
Group

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We now face a more insidious and profound challenge to our liberties – the rising tide of intolerance. The Bruges Group challenges false and damaging orthodoxies that suppress debate and incite enmity. It will continue to direct Britain’s role in the world, act as a voice for the Union, and promote our historic liberty, democracy, transparency, and rights. It spearheads the resistance to attacks on free speech and provides a voice for those who value our freedoms and way of life.

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Summary

- The popular sport of football, and its showpiece tournament, is the analytical device by which press fairness and reliability can be assessed. Reporting on the 2022 FIFA World Cup is the litmus test that shows which newspapers can and cannot be trusted.
- The Bruges Group notes the positive progress made by Qatar to improve human rights in that country and reform its labour laws, especially the liberalisation of its employment market.
- A nefarious and aggressive PR campaign is being waged against the FIFA 2022 Qatar World Cup. The aim is to strip that country of its right to host the tournament. This is part of an agenda to damage Qatar's government.
- Qatar's neighbours have waged a particularly aggressive campaign against the small nation, attacks on the country are now being carried out in the British press and the UK's mainstream media. Public relations is the continuation of politics by other means.
- Those who want to humble Qatar seek to, as its opponents have themselves admitted, weaponise the issue of workers' rights.
- Coverage in *The Guardian* has been particularly misleading.
- *The Guardian* has not been entirely direct with their source of funding and their funders' relationship with editorial stances. A source of funds is a US based organisation called Humanity United which may have influenced coverage of issues that are used by some to prejudice opinion against Qatar's hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Humanity United, has cooperative links to George

Soros associated organisations, and itself has been unfairly critical of Qatar.

- Slavery and human rights abuses in the United Arab Emirates have not received the same level of condemnation from *The Guardian* and Humanity United. That is despite the UAE hosting important mega cultural events and international competitions.
- *The Guardian's* apparent obsession with workers' rights in Qatar is out of proportion to other similar British and international newspapers.
- Sentiment analysis, using artificial intelligence, and qualitative analysis using standard discourse analysis techniques reveals that *The Guardian* has a particular and specific agenda relating to Qatar.
- Events of similar status in the middle east, such as the Dubai World Fair, and other sporting events in the region, do not receive the same level of criticism from the press that Qatar has received. That is despite egregious abuses of worker and human rights taking place in states such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia.
- The positive and internationally recognised reforms in Qatar have received little praise from the British press, other states receive little criticism.
- Whereas criticism of Qatar is directly linked to their hosting of the world cup, which itself is part of the strategy used to isolate that country, the same level of vitriol is not used against other sporting events even in regimes that are on very different trajectories to Qatar, namely China.
- *The Guardian* newspaper at times follows an insidious agenda. If it cannot be trusted to fairly report on a football tournament and aligns itself with the campaign to undermine the world cup, then newspapers in The Guardian Media Group cannot be trusted on other issues..

This report recommends that:

- The status of newspaper of record should be removed from *The Guardian*.
- The Competition and Markets Authority should reduce the power of press barons and breakup both the BBC and media groups, first amongst them should be the Guardian Media Group.
- Foreign funded press campaigns and media advertising originating from overseas interests must cease.
- Editors and executives with overseas interests that is of interest to readers, should have to declare it in the interests of context and transparency.
- *The Guardian* must explain its links to foreign organisations that are seeking to influence its coverage.
- Football fans should enjoy the FIFA 2022 World Cup in Qatar!

Introduction

- *Quis custodiet ipsos custodies*

Opinion



**Comment is free...
but facts are sacred
CP Scott, 1921 Guardian editor**

Figure 2

*facts are sacred' – The Guardian quoting their own former
Editor Charles P. Scott, on their opinion page.*

Who can we trust for our news? Naturally everyone, including journalists and editors and proprietors of media outlets, have their own world view and beliefs. They know their audience and want to take advantage of their readers, viewers, or listeners tendency towards confirmation bias – the practice of searching out information and opinion that reflects one's view. That is to be expected and the public are aware of this. The power of the press to influence is also limited by its need to follow its audience and reinforce their existing prejudices. This limits an outlet's ability to change the opinions of its readers. Furthermore, ethical considerations

should still hold some sway over the actions of journalists, amongst these are the requirement for fidelity and veracity. It is not acceptable for 'evidence' to be fabricated and invented; or at least it should not be.

It may be forgivable, even desirable that, for instance, a newspaper will campaign on one side or another on the issue of Brexit and report facts that support its corporate agenda and reinforce its readers' views. A plethora of news sources and the existence of a still ongoing national debate on Britain's departure from the European Union means that people will receive opinions and sources of information that they may not have sought out or even welcome, such a phenomenon ensures that some degree of balance exists in the national conversation for rational readers and even partisan observers. There are, however, areas, namely foreign affairs and reporting on issues abroad where the reader is relying on their chosen media to be fair and balanced. And one would expect a journalist to uphold the principles they learnt at journalism school. One could assume that they would have no reason to supply their reader with misinformation, or as it is now termed, disinformation, or fake news. However, that is not always the case.

This report recommends that *The Guardian* explain its links to foreign organisations that are seeking to influence its coverage. The interests of democracy and sovereignty require that any perversion of the mainstream media by foreign funded campaigns and advertising originating from overseas interests ceases. Fairness requires that a new Leveson enquiry be held to investigate influences that may be undermining honest debate in Britain, hiding some topics from the public whilst simultaneously distracting them by highlighting other issues. The Competition and Markets Authority should reduce the power of press barons and breakup both the BBC and other media groups, first amongst them should

be the Guardian Media Group. Their efforts to undermine the biggest political mandate in this country's history, and those newspapers support for globalist interests highlights the need for reform. It is acknowledged that the EU is a divisive issue so there are other topics that suggest that nefarious interests are seeking to influence coverage. Accordingly, this study looks at another topic. Football, the national game of many nations on earth, and its show piece tournament the quadrennial FIFA World Cup, is the new acid test of whom we can trust.

A test of fairness

"Some people believe football is a matter of life and death, I am very disappointed with that attitude. I can assure you it is much, much more important than that." So said legendary Liverpool FC manager Bill Shankly. It appears that there is still much truth to that statement. Football is not only on the back pages of newspapers, it can also make the front cover as well.

There are times when the beautiful game has gone from the sublime to the ridiculous, the short-lived Football War fought between El Salvador and Honduras in 1969 is one such example. There is another instance when the working man's ballet is more than a matter of impassioned pleasure or frustration. The dispute over Qatar's hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup is an international matter that is far from reminiscent of the farcical affair in Central America that lasted a brief 100 hours towards the end of the nineteen-sixties. Issues surrounding the reaction of some states to Qatar's successful goal of winning the right to host the football world cup in 2022 is a geopolitical issue.

As Britain is dependent on gas from the Persian Gulf region, particularly liquefied natural gas supplied by Qatar, that means the area's politics is a matter of great importance to the UK. Qatar's hosting of the World Cup encapsulates international disputes, mammon, human rights, and arguably one of the greatest shows on earth. It tells us a lot about the world we live in and much about the British press. Indeed, there is no better example of the misinformation that breeds mistrust in the media than that regarding the issue of Qatar and its controversial hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Coverage surrounding the construction of Qatar's 2022 FIFA World Cup facilities, stadiums, and labour rights in that small country, a peninsula jutting out into the Persian Gulf, is the litmus test that shows which media, and what journalists, can and cannot be trusted. It is true that there is controversy surrounding Qatar's hosting of the World Cup, most of which surrounds the treatment of migrant labour in that country. Stories on that topic have created some lurid headlines. *The Guardian* newspaper has led the way in the British press on highlighting inequities in that country. Is this justified? And is there a nefarious agenda at work that seeks to slant peoples' perceptions against Qatar and its showcase tournament?

This report will compare and contrast *The Guardian's* reportage with other mass media sources in both the United Kingdom, sections of which are notorious for sensationalism, partisan reporting, and sometimes unethical standards using inappropriate and, as the phone hacking enquiry showed, sometimes even illegal sources of information. Discourse analysis, and the evaluation and interpretation of figures, numbers, and statistics will show *The Guardian* is less reliable than other British newspapers. The UK's media will also be analysed against those from other parts of the globe. As we have long suspected *The Guardian* has an

unfair agenda and should not be big tech's newspaper of record. Journalism is a profession that has long been in decline. The need to provide quick clickbait stories that are little more than vehicles for advertising someone's agenda has hastened the demise of objective reporting and investigative journalism that gets to the truth of a story. *The Guardian* it would seem is at the forefront of that descent into sensationalism.

This report makes use of 'Sentiment analysis' also known as 'emotion AI' and 'opinion mining' this uses 'natural language processing, text analysis, computational linguistics, and biometrics to systematically identify, extract, quantify, and study affective states and subjective information.'¹ It is highly useful in analysing the written news 'where journalists may not explicitly *Express* their opinions.'² It defines information as positive, negative, or neutral.³ This is especially useful for this study because it is not subject to prejudices. Human content analysis is also applied.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sentiment_analysis

² <https://aclanthology.org/2021.eacl-main.142/>

³ <https://www.lexalytics.com/technology/sentiment-analysis>

The tainted source



Humanity United
@HumanityUnited

We are honored to support @guardian in their newest project, Rights and Freedom, launching TODAY! The reporting series investigates & exposes global #humanrights abuses by elevating the voices of those working on the frontlines in their communities.
bit.ly/3btfrM3



5:37 AM · Feb 23, 2021 · Twitter Web App

4 Retweets 1 Quote Tweet 18 Likes

Figure 3

A tweet by Humanity United on their support for The Guardian

... One such infamous but still influential article appeared in the focus of our study, *The Guardian*. It implied that 6,500 deaths of migrant labourers have occurred building the world cup venues. If true it would mean that the 2022 FIFA World Cup, one of mankind's biggest cultural and sporting celebrations, is coming at a massive human cost. Yet just because it appeared in the paper need not make it

so. *The Guardian* have been paid to cover such stories, that gives the appearance that their articles on Qatar may be more akin to sponsored content that masquerades as news which the reader would expect to have been subject to normal journalistic standards of fact checking and corroboration of sources.⁴ *The Guardian* receives financial support

⁴ <https://dctransparency.com/uae-pr-machine-promote-fake-news-on-qatar-world-cup-push-for-european-boycott/>

from a US based organisation called Humanity United.⁵ Concerningly, controversial billionaire, George Soros, whose criminal conviction was upheld by the European Court of Human Rights, actively supports organisations that partner with Humanity United. The Soros Economic Development Fund and Soros' Open Society Foundations, which awards grants and sponsors organisations and campaigns, is therefore linked to Humanity United. George Soros is a man that is known for meddling in the political and economic future of nations that should be none of his concern.

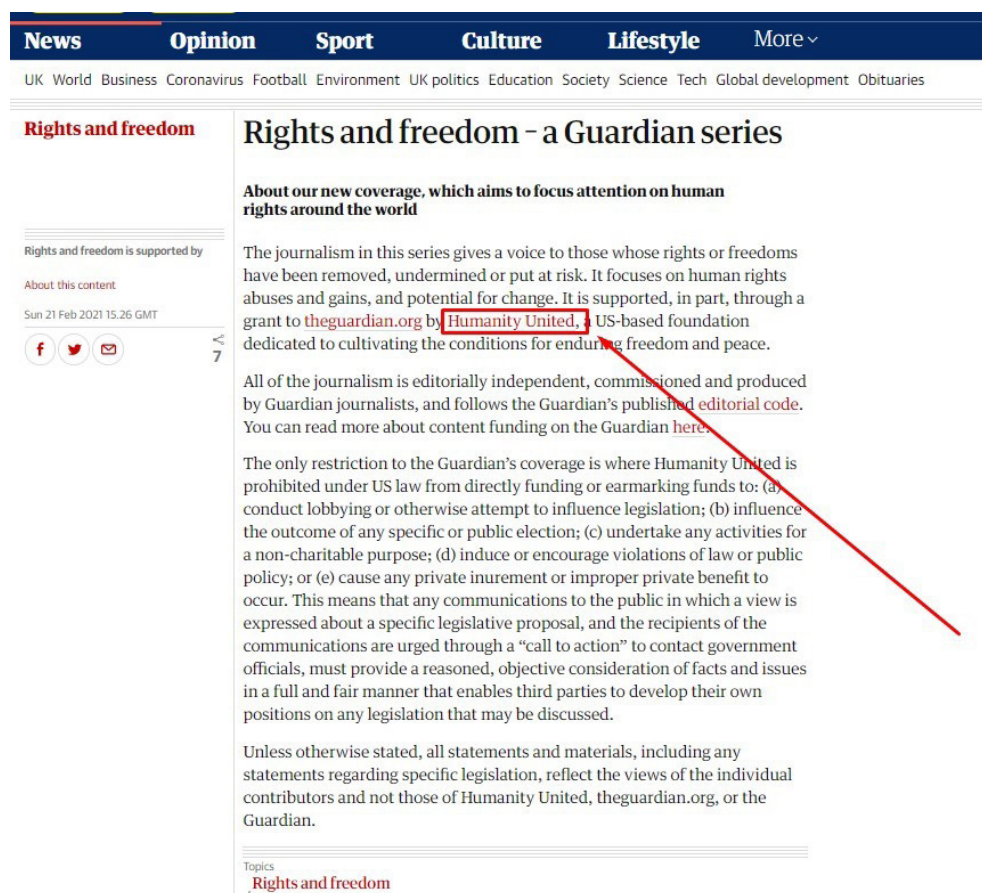


Figure 4

The ultimate responsibility to allow such paid advertorials would rest with the editor. The attraction of these to those responsible for the content of the

⁵ <https://humanityunited.org/performance-report2011/>

loss-making newspaper that is *The Guardian*⁶ is obvious. Due to declining sales it has to rely on other sources of funds for revenue. It is, however, embarrassing, or should be. In relation to Qatar, the reality is very different to that claimed in *The Guardian*.

The real figure of migrant deaths is somewhat different to that claimed in *The Guardian*. Since 2013, when work began on the twenty-five sites where construction has taken place there has been just a fraction of the number. Whilst workplace deaths are a tragedy the safety record in Qatar is superior to some countries in western Europe. Measures are also in place to blacklist companies that breach safety standards and exploit their staff. Information corroborating this is publicly available, and a summary of the changes that Qatar has introduced is available in Appendix II.^{7 8} Yet the truth does not conform to the narrative and has not been reproduced in *The Guardian*. That is the case even though, as FIFA Ethics and Regulations Watch acknowledge, Qatar is an example to the world and the principle of reform should be adopted by all bodies that award the rights to host mega sporting events.

⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/jul/27/guardian-losses-members>

⁷ https://dctransparency.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Labour_Factsheet.pdf

⁸ <https://dctransparency.com/uae-pr-machine-promote-fake-news-on-qatar-world-cup-push-for-european-boycott/>

Facts and fiction

The Independent organisation, FIFA Ethics and Regulations Watch (FERW), produced a report titled *Qatar 22 an exemplar for change, or another missed opportunity*. This is based on a detailed analysis of the legislative changes in Qatar and details their labour and immigration reforms, and their effect on the workers themselves. These changes are summarised in Appendix II. This extensive report also included a detailed and confidential survey of migrant workers. Furthermore, a delegation consisting of representatives of FERW, the media, the Bruges Group, former British parliamentarians including a Minister charged with delivering the London 2012 Olympics, have found the truth to be very different to the picture painted in *The Guardian*. Their investigation involved the International Labour Organisation, the National Human Rights Committee, The Minister of Labour, Ali bin Samikh Al Marri, The Red Crescent, employers, accommodation services, the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy of the Qatar FIFA World Cup, and employees and their representatives. The UK's Health and Safety Executive have evaluated the audited figures which show the exemplary efforts to provide for the welfare of workers. This should not come as a surprise.

In 2009 Qatar decided to change, this has been accelerated by the awarding of the World Cup to the peninsula nation. The vast majority of migrant workers believe that the World Cup has improved their conditions. Indeed, more recent legislative changes and the country's partnership with the International Labour Organisation are a direct consequence of the World Cup which, as shown by FERW,

has accelerated the process of human rights and labour law reforms in Qatar. Since 2017 the direction of travel has been clear and despite some difficulties, its cooperation with the International Labour Organisation is having an impact. Yet, that is rarely reported in the press. Whilst not the new nirvana some seemingly demand that it must become overnight, Qatar is ahead of its regional rivals, the neighbouring emirates and kingdoms. Indeed, in the FIFA Ethics and Regulations Watch survey most migrant workers overwhelmingly preferred being employed in Qatar above working in other Gulf states, namely the United Arab Emirates or the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In a separate question the migrant workers again reiterated that they felt workers' rights were superior in Qatar to those in neighbouring Gulf states. This did not appear in *The Guardian*..

Press and Prejudice I:

AI analysis

Sentiment analysis of *The Guardian* from early October 2021 to mid-January 2022 showed that there were few positive articles that related to searches on the world cup, Qatar, and human rights. This was the case despite human rights reforms in Qatar that include moves to grant female Qatari citizens the right to pass on their citizenship to their children and the announcement that same sex couples will be welcome to attend the tournament and can also display the rainbow flag.⁹ Interestingly these major steps for an Arab nation, whose main religion is the Wahhabi branch of Islam, has been cautiously welcomed by *The Independent* newspaper.¹⁰ That publication is very similar to *The Guardian* with a comparable readership and a shared domestic political agenda.



Figure 5

A recent Guardian headline on Norwegian journalists arrested on trespassing charges – before being sent back to Norway.

⁹ <https://www.espn.com/soccer/fifa-world-cup/story/4258559/2022-world-cup-qatar-to-allow-lgbtq-displaysrainbow-flags-in-stadiums>

¹⁰ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/qatar-lgbt-homosexuality-world-cup-b1900534.html>

The Guardian, which is issued on weekdays and Saturdays, has a sister paper, a Sunday, called *The Observer*. This news outlet shares the same political philosophy, world view, and a similar readership as the other weekday paper in the Guardian Media Group. It also covers both domestic UK and international news. However, it does not approach the issue of the World Cup, Qatar, football, and workers' rights with quite the same zealotry as *The Guardian*. Indeed, *The Observer* is disinterested in the topic with only three relevant articles and analysing this coverage using the same search terms and analytical tools it not only rarely mentions Qatar's tournament but when it does it has done so favourably.

The sentiment in *The Observer* is clearly very different. The contrasting attitudes of its sister paper means the natural political slant and interests of the readers that would normally affect coverage of a topic is less likely to be the factor that motivates journalists at *The Guardian* to write highly critical coverage of the 2022 FIFA tournament. *The Guardian* did report on abuses of workers in China, this should not be surprising as Chinese exploitation of certain groups of citizens has expanded since the greatest sports show on earth was awarded to Beijing in 2008. Yet the number of articles is comparable to those that discuss human rights in Qatar. It is not only a much smaller country and therefore cannot commit the same number of abuses as the much larger state, but the fact is also that Qatar has made significant reforms and its positive treatment of migrant workers is simply not comparable to Chinese slave labour camps.

Over the same period of study there were 54 articles in *The Guardian* that looked at China's winter Olympics, and human rights. There were more than 3½ times the number of negative articles on that topic than those deemed to be positive. There is a major difference between articles that discuss labour rights. With

regards to China, the abuses are the focus of the study and reference is made to their hosting of the winter Olympics. It appears that articles looking at Qatar directly link the world cup with systemic abuse of migrant labour. Furthermore, despite the reforms, of the 57 articles which looked at this topic there were nearly twice as many negative articles compared to those with a positive sentiment. *The Guardian* did unfavourably look upon the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia. There is still a plethora of articles, 104 over the same time span and labour rights search terms that still unfavourably look at that tournament, the country and its treatment of workers. Indeed, there were more than twice as many negative articles than positive. Surprisingly, *The Guardian* did, however, only have 18 articles that were relevant to Russia's earlier tournament and the topic of human rights, yet the negative articles outweighed the positive by a factor of three to one. When it came to writing about the 2018 FIFA World Cup the biggest issue remained the game and not the rights of Russian citizens. This is somewhat surprising. *The Guardian* is especially critical of Putin's rule and foreign policy.

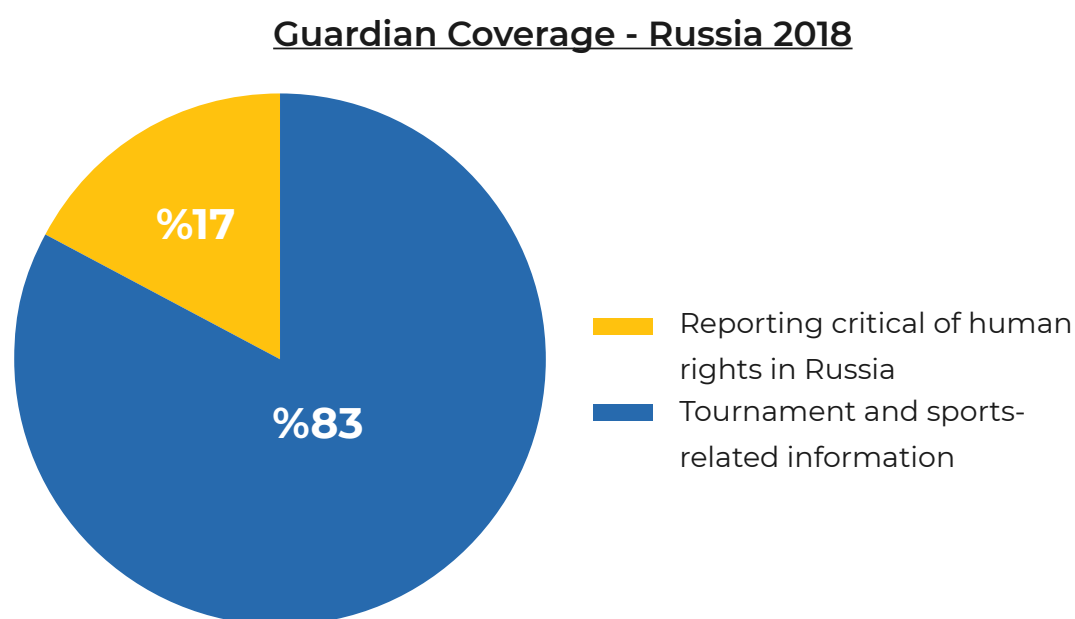


Figure 6

There were 77 articles in *The Guardian* that were relevant under an analysis that looked at the world cup, Qatar, and human rights. Here *The Guardian* showed more objectivity. The number of positive articles with a positive sentiment were $\frac{2}{3}$ of the negative, nearing the same quantity. Clearly labour rights are the substantive issue, or in the eyes of its enemies, its Achilles' heel. When *The Guardian's* coverage of migrant workers in Qatar is compared to the totality of the British online and print news media a stark contrast emerges. There were 1,356 relevant UK articles that wrote about Qatar, the world cup, and workers rights. There were slightly more positive articles than negative. That figure even included the queering of the pitch that *The Guardian's* slanted coverage produced. That is dramatic and showed that *The Guardian* is offside from the rest of the British press. Further qualitative analysis is available in Appendix I; this compares selected British newspapers with comparable newspapers of note in other countries. The findings are interesting.

Story behind the Qatar World Cup and the legacy it will leave behind

WITH Qatar facing fierce criticism over human and workers rights ahead of the World Cup, David Maddox, the Sunday Express Political Editor, joined a delegation of independent observers to find out what is really happening in the first Middle Eastern country to hold one of the top two sporting tournaments. He discovered that the truth is very different to the allegations.

By **DAVID MADDOX**
22:00, Sat, Nov 13, 2021



The Official Emblem of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ is unveiled.

Figure 7

A piece by Express Political Editor David Maddox, recognising the strides that have been made through Qatari reforms.

Despite Qatar's laudable progress, and then punching above their weight attempts at brokering international peace agreements, the country has faced a disinformation campaign from Britain's notorious fourth estate. British media coverage sends the wrong message to countries that are seeking to reform. No credit, apart from in the *Sunday Express* newspaper¹¹ has been given. There has even been a very positive side to Qatar's hosting of the world cup. Accommodation for football fans is provided to refugees fleeing Afghanistan.¹² However, apart from that impartial investigative reporting, most of the British press appears to be fixated on negatively covering Qatar. Yet, many have given a relatively free pass to China and other Arab regimes. Human and labour rights are much less likely to be linked to mega cultural events in certain other countries. The question must be answered as to what the origins and motives for such misinformation are? Personal ambition, geopolitical rivalries, and attempts to obscure the iniquitous policies of rival regimes have encouraged the media to unfairly focus on Qatar and ignore the disreputable actions of more powerful players in the region. Whilst there has been coverage and criticism of the abhorrent abuses of human rights in China and the Chinese Communist Party's abysmal treatment of its subjects in the parts of China that are under its occupation, this has not generated the same amount of column inches condemning Beijing's hosting of the 2022 Winter Olympics. This is problematic. The decision to award the 2008 Summer Olympics and the recognition and endorsement this brought marked not the liberalisation of China but reinforced and encouraged the CCP to expand its power over its near abroad, continue to repress *lao baixing*, and increase its

11 <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1520982/qatar-world-cup-legacy>

12 <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1520948/Qatar-world-cup-accommodation-afghanistan>

cultural genocide of the Uyghur Muslim population. Yet that seemingly does not warrant repeated and rabid *exposés* of the construction of China's 2022 Winter Olympic sites let alone stripping them of their status as host. Neither did the 2018 FIFA World Cup which was awarded to Vladimir Putin's Russia.

The slanted reporting in *The Guardian* and other media also contrasts with another high prestige mega event taking place in the region. Dubai, a city and emirate in the United Arab Emirates, was chosen to host Expo 2020. This was delayed by Covid, running from 1st October 2021 to 31st March 2022. It is a major economic and cultural event. The awarding of this world fair to Dubai was made by The Bureau international des expositions (BIE). This body supervises and grants official status to these important and prestigious expositions. They generate a great deal of international and commercial interest both among the population of the host state and the international community. Its venues, built by exploited migrant labour, will aid the powerful interests that govern Dubai and the United Arab Emirates. World Expos are intended to promote the interests of humanity, however, the paradox that such an event takes place in the UAE of all locations in the world seemingly contradicts the righteousness that world fairs are meant to represent. This should have created a wave of criticism in the same moralising media that targets Qatar but they are silent regarding Dubai. Such a discrepancy is sadly not a lone occurrence.

The Guardian's coverage of the Dubai Expo is alarmed solely about the repeated threat that Covid poses to this prestigious event, which was delayed by a year due to the pandemic. Little effort has been taken to report the abuse of migrant workers in the UAE and the manifest human rights violations that take place there.

Whereas, *The Guardian* has concern about migrant workers employed in Qatar's capital Doha, it appears that other issues are mentioned much more often when the labour is toiling in Dubai. This is not an isolated phenomenon.

and judicial murder of dissidents which even extends to assassination such as with the killing of *The Washington Post* journalist Jamal Khashoggi. However, that regime benefits politically and economically from hosting a whole series of sporting events from boxing championship fights to Grand Prix racing. The construction of arena and venues for such occasions is carried out by exploited foreign labourers. They merely generate comment that is nothing like the sustained campaign of criticism that Qatar has been subject to.

Who Can Be Trusted?

Fake News and the FIFA 2022 World Cup Media Coverage



UAE's woeful human rights record¹³, modern slavery abuses¹⁴, and use of spyware software to censor and suppress those campaigning for their civil liberties¹⁵ however received little attention. The reasons why may be explained by the strange confluence of Lynton Crosby, a diplomatic crisis, and an attempted coup.

Press and prejudice II: Qualitative analysis

Figure 9



An example of a representative article from The Guardian on other parties' concerns with Qatar 2022.

In Appendix I, looking at six major newspaper cohorts' (*The Guardian*, *The Times*, *The Express*, *la Repubblica*, *Die Welt* and *Bild* analysed in the appendix) coverage of the 2022 World Cup, 2022 Winter Olympics, and 2018 World Cup in Qatar, China, and Russia respectively, it is clear that *The Guardian's* coverage of Qatar – while lining up with the overall trend of mostly scepticism and criticism

¹³ <https://impactpolicies.org/en/news/235>

¹⁴ <https://impactpolicies.org/en/news/250/ajad-facilities-management-vulnerable-employees-denied-their-rights-in-the-uae>

¹⁵ <https://impactpolicies.org/en/news/249/webinar-spyware-surveillance-and-civil-liberties>

of the host country and event – has reserved particular criticism of Qatar workers' rights conditions. Criticism of Russia and China from *The Guardian* surrounds a host of issues and while this does not mean the criticism is any weaker, *The Guardian* continues to cover preparation for the Qatar World Cup by voicing one-sided, partisan criticism from NGOs and external organisations responding to allegations, from Amnesty International to the Norwegian club Tromsø. In looking at how *The Guardian* covers Qatar compared to the other newspapers in the UK, it is clear that only *The Express* offers a differing opinion, based on FIFA Ethics and Regulation Watch's recent report. While acknowledging the sufferings of the kafala labour system and the deaths that took place, *The Express* also cites enormous strides made and how the World Cup sped up the process of labour reform, from rigorous safety standards to a new minimum wage – all changes that are important to understanding the full picture but seemingly never mentioned by *The Guardian*.

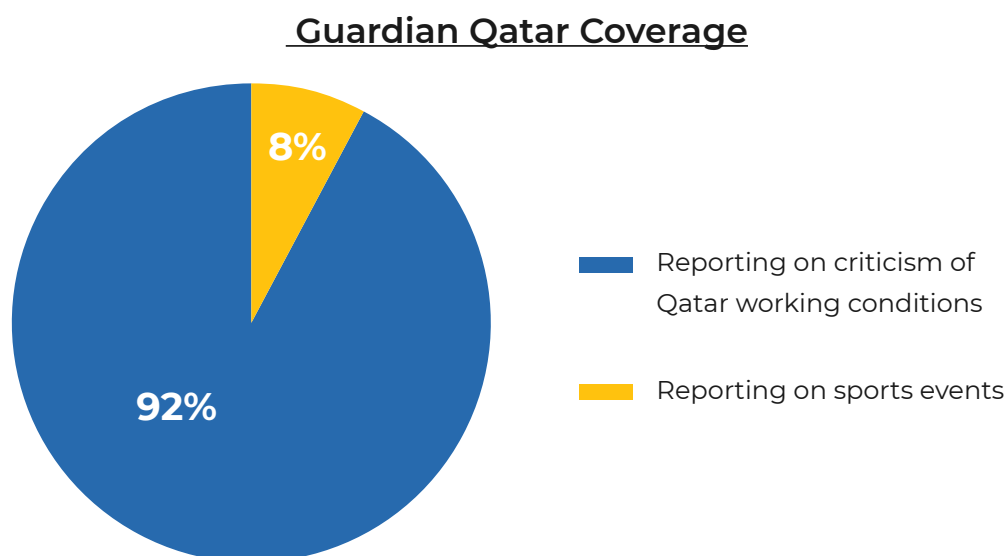


Figure 10

Guardian Beijing Coverage

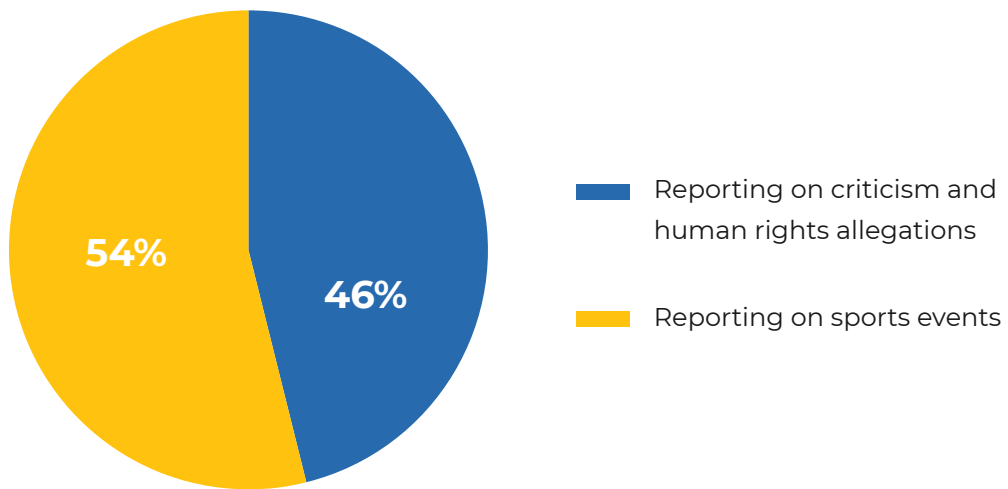


Figure 11

Guardian Coverage - Beijing 2022 vs Qatar 2022

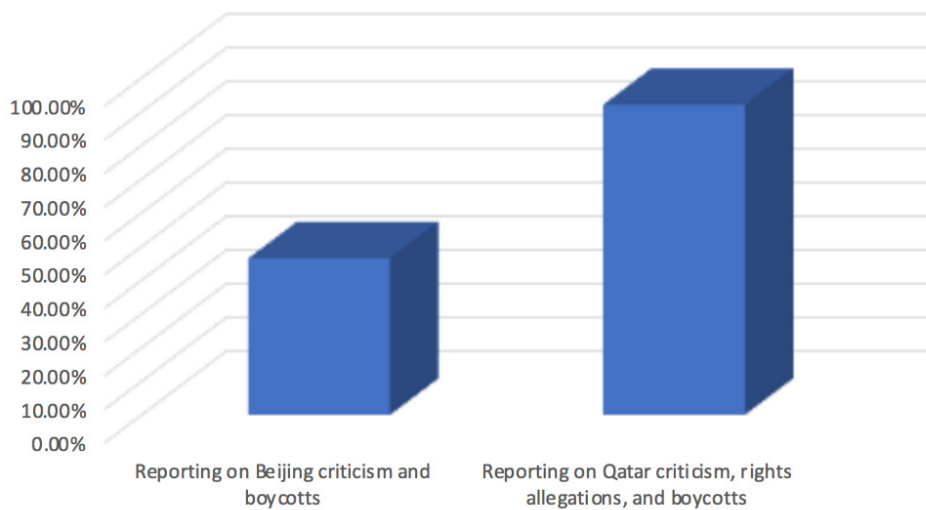


Figure 12

The triple

There have been several campaigns that have sought to damn the reputation of Qatar. British and American spin doctors based in London worked a negative public relations campaign in the United Kingdom's press to endorse a failed coup by Khalid al-Hail.¹⁶

A separate campaign involved none other than Lynton Crosby a man that has a close association with the current governing party in the United Kingdom, a country that is closely allied with the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. The UK has even become embroiled in the House of Saud's war, and the resulting humanitarian crisis, in Yemen.¹⁷ Indeed, it has been reported that Crosby's firm, CTF Partners, did not deny that it has provided media support to the ruler and Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman. CTF even assisted Khalid al-Hail. Wrestling the World Cup from Qatar has been one of the overriding aims shared between the interests that Crosby sought to represent. The PR guru's strategy to achieve that objective was to produce research that seeks to link Qatar with terrorism, and to delegitimise the Qatari government and its World Cup. They would use their resources and lobbying influence to convince FIFA to take the tournament from Qatar. Campaign bases in Washington DC, London, and even in Italy as well as Crosby's native Australia would be brought into play. Countries and their citizens around the world would be encouraged to highlight concerns about Qatar. Social media, in particular Facebook, would be harnessed. This has

¹⁶ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/qatari-exile-spin-war-and-cack-handed-push-coup>

¹⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jun/18/the-saudis-couldnt-do-it-without-us-the-uks-true-role-in-yemens-deadly-war>

been widely reported.^{18 19 20 21 22} A leading tactic of those who seek to undermine the legitimacy of Qatar's right to host the tournament is to allege human rights abuses particularly of migrant labour engaged in constructing the venues in and around Doha, the capital city of Qatar.

Crosby's strategy has been exposed. His company's pitch stated that, "We would identify all potential 'allies' in the media, politics, industry, academia, and government and reach out to them guiding a deliberate attempt to inform and motivate them about the need to reconsider Qatar's hosting of the World Cup in 2022." *The Guardian* should know better than to join such a campaign against Qatar, indeed they do²³, the newspaper has itself reported on the surreptitious campaign against Qatar. Yet its editorial department seemingly does not know what its different departments are doing or does not care about its own corporate cognitive dissonance.

Of more significance was the information war waged against Qatar as part of the diplomatic crisis that is otherwise known as the blockade. The attempts to enforce the isolation of Qatar have ended but the implications are still with us and intrinsically linked to the football tournament. It would appear that *The Guardian* newspaper has aligned itself with the interests of Saudi Arabia under its ruler Mohammed bin Salman, and with those of the UAE controlled by Mohamed bin Zayed. Those states, along with Bahrain, Egypt, and others in 2017 launched a blockade against Qatar that lasted for nearly 3½ years and ended in early 2021. In international law a blockade can be considered an act of war. That punitive

¹⁸ <https://www.aljazeera.com/sports/2019/2/10/guardian-lynton-crosby-offered-to-undermine-2022-qatar-world-cup>

¹⁹ <https://dctransparency.com/uae-pr-machine-promote-fake-news-on-qatar-world-cup-push-for-european-boycott/>

²⁰ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6690715/Sir-Lynton-Crosby-proposed-5-5million-campaign-2022-Qatar-World-Cup-cancelled.html>

²¹ <https://www.prweek.com/article/1525449/lynton-crosbys-lobbying-firm-pitched-55m-campaign-pressure-fifa-terminate-qatar-world-cup>

²² <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/tory-guru-lynton-crosby-offered-to-scupper-qatar-world-cup-for-5-5m-wnjvjz89w>

²³ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/10/lynton-crosby-2022-qatar-world-cup-ctf-partners>

and aggressive action was linked by the UAE and Saudi Arabia and its axis to the 2022 FIFA World Cup and promised to lift the blockade if Qatar was stripped of its right to host the tournament. Other demands included closing the Al-Jazeera news channel and its affiliates. The blockade failed and plucky Qatar refused to concede to the egregious demands placed upon it.

If the geopolitical interests that condemned Qatar to a sustained attack on its autonomy and sovereign right to conduct its own foreign policy did not share the nefarious aims of those that may have sought to sponsor such a campaign by CTF Partners then Lynton Crosby's firm may have experienced controversy comparable to the late Lord Bell's defunct Bell Pottinger. That company became embroiled in a fake news story regarding South Africa and was consequently struck off by the Public Relations and Communications Association, the trade body that represents and informally regulates communications agencies. Bell Pottinger then went into administration and is no more.²⁴ The loss-making Guardian newspaper should be allowed to go the same way. Indeed, a substantial proportion of its income comes via the United Kingdom's television tax which enables the BBC to buy advertising ²⁵ ²⁶ in that journal and copious amounts of copies, thus helping to keep its shoddy journalism afloat.²⁷

Despite the failure of the coup, the exposure of the Crosby campaign, and the ending of the diplomatic crisis brought on by the blockade the media narrative was set. However, the dishonest affair demonstrates that *The Guardian* newspaper may be conducting a disinformation campaign with the British people the target of unbalanced coverage thus making it technically deceitful.

²⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2017/sep/12/bell-pottinger-goes-into-administration>

²⁵ <https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/showthread.php?t=1398327>

²⁶ <https://forums.digitalspy.com/discussion/1347344/is-it-true-that-the-bbc-spends-more-in-the-guardian>

²⁷ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4669728/BBC-admits-spends-139-000-year-buying-Guardian.html>

For Guardian journalists to align with their *bête noire*, Lynton Crosby and CTF Partners²⁸, is in itself quite remarkable. Yet it is in alliance with US linked organisations and in alignment with certain regimes in the Middle East that are far from the values of *The Guardian*. It claims to encourage, 'diversity' and to 'champion inclusivity'²⁹. Principles not practised in Saudi. Similarly *The Guardian's* depiction of British Home Secretary Priti Patel was widely seen as being racist and misogynistic.³⁰ That is further evidence that they have lost their moral compass. Perhaps this should not be surprising. It claims to follow the values of 'honesty, integrity, courage, fairness'. Its honesty and integrity are truly in question. Its decision to allow the unmasking of whistle-blower Sarah Tisdall was anything but courageous and led to her sentenced to 6 months in prison.³¹ The decision was at the request of the British authorities and the eavesdropping agency Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ).³² Despite that this newspaper also claims the following 'We stand up for what we believe is right, not what is easy'. Another questionable assertion. Its direction of travel is clear. It has repeatedly been accused of fake news regarding embattled Wikileaks founder Julian Assange³³ and even defaming him by deceptively doctoring quotes that disparage his reputation.³⁴ Furthermore, it reports shrill and exaggerated slights against Assange³⁵ that have been made against the man because he got in the way of the US neocon agenda.

It has been reported that following the capitulation to GCHQ and their demand

28 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/apr/03/grassroots-facebook-brexit-ads-secretly-run-by-staff-of-lynton-crosby-firm>

29 <https://workforus.theguardian.com/our-values>

30 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/picture/2020/mar/04/steve-bell-on-boris-johnson-defending-priti-patel-at-pmqs-cartoon>

31 <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2005/sep/05/pressandpublishing.politicsandthemedial>

32 <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/jan/31/footage-released-guardian-editors-snowden-hard-drives-gchq>

33 <https://mondediplo.com/2019/01/10/guardian>

34 <https://www.breitbart.com/tech/2016/12/29/fake-news-guardian-caught-deceptively-editing-quotes-from-julian-assange-interview/>

35 <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2010/dec/19/assange-high-tech-terrorist-biden>

to delete data on state surveillance relating to information from Edward Snowden *The Guardian* changed and ceased publishing sensitive information from whistleblowers and started complying with D-notices (non-binding requests to not publish information). Indeed, its deputy editor Paul Johnson began sitting on the D-Notice committee that seeks to exercise state influence over the press. Britain's *enfant terrible* of journalism then became subject to a seduction campaign mounted by the security services and were granted a series of intelligence interviews and exclusives. This is not an isolated incident. There is often a direct correlation between 'woke dogma' an epitaph that applies to *The Guardian* and neocon beliefs. In some people's perceptions *The Guardian* ceased to be the venerable seekers, and publishers, of truth and began their decent into becoming a mouthpiece for the globalist uber establishment.³⁶

³⁶ <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2019-09-11-how-the-uk-security-services-neutralised-the-countrys-leading-liberal-newspaper/>

Reputation laundering by proxy

There are other motivations at work. It is not uncommon for autocratic regimes to mix the personal with the political. When too much power is centred around a fragile ego another state's success, particularly if that country is ruled by a rival, can provoke a reaction. The bold decision of Qatar to compete on its own to host the world cup, forsaking any partnership with neighbouring states, which incidentally showed little interest in bidding to host what is one of the biggest festivals of sport on the globe, would have been galling for men such as Mohammed bin Zayed the ruler of the United Arab Emirates. That state, and Saudi Arabia, have thus far not reformed their human rights to the same level as Qatar. Indeed, the UAE and Saudi Arabia are far from free. It makes sense for them to deflect from their own woeful record.

It has long been a nefarious and unethical tactic of PR men to improve a client's reputation by damning others. Mark Bolland, one time spin doctor to Prince Charles, sought to improve his employer's reputation by briefing against the heir to the throne's youngest brother Prince Edward in a 'Charles good, all other royals bad' strategy.³⁷ Indeed, the Prince of Wales himself is perhaps being hoist with his own petard. His son, Harry, the Duke of Sussex, may have inadvertently improved his reputation when he unfairly damned the reputation of his own family including his Father.

³⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2003/oct/27/mondaymediasection.themonarchy>

The attacks on Qatar and its hosting of the World Cup, particularly the treatment of migrants in that small nation, has succeeded in deflecting attention from much worse situations that exist elsewhere on the Arabian Peninsula. The criticism of Qatar from its neighbours and rivals has seen the successful application of what can be described as Inverted Sportswashing. However, a free society allows for scrutiny of the arguments of actors in the public square and for any hypocrisy to be exposed. A correction mechanism is needed in Britain.

Figure 13

Winter Olympics 2022

Could 2022 be sportswashing's biggest year?

A year bookended by the Beijing Winter Olympics and the Fifa World Cup in Qatar could be a high point of authoritarian regimes looking to cover up their dismal human rights records

Karim Zidan



A Guardian headline on sportswashing, jointly referring to the Beijing Winter Olympics and Qatar 2022. It is however absurd to compare the two.

It is not unusual that countries with different cultural norms and less free economic models host international occasions. Other states in the region, and indeed, many around the world routinely offend human rights yet host mega cultural events that are equally prestigious as the world cup. However, the reaction against Qatar has been marked and tells us a lot about the world and about sections of the British press.

Qatar's hosting of the World Cup and other sporting events will go ahead as planned. However, it appears that public relations is the continuation of politics by other means. Newspapers in the Guardian Media Group had articles that waged





a disinformation war against Brexit³⁸, serving the interests of a powerful few against the interests of the many ³⁹, and undermining the democratic mandate of the referendum; *The Guardian* has become the useful idiots for an insidious campaign against Qatar. That country is one of the few countries in the region that is attempting to reform. Mark Twain may have reported there are “Lies, damned lies, and Guardian articles.”




³⁸ <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/carole-cadwalladr-should-now-return-her-orwell-prize>



³⁹ <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/649308/EU-referendum-Lord-Rose-Britain-Stronger-Europe-UKIP-wages-Brussels-Cameron>

Appendix I.

Press comparison: Qualitative analysis

	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>The Times</i>	<i>The Express</i>	<i>la Repubblica</i>	<i>Die Welt / Bild</i>
2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar	<p>Could 2022 be sportswashing's biggest year?</p>  <p>Qatar and Beijing Games described as engaging in 'sportswashing' to cover up 'dismal human rights records. Sportswashing used to refer to infamous 1936 Berlin Olympics, an attempt to push the Nazi agenda.</p>  <p>There were 38 articles from <i>The Guardian</i> covering Qatar, 35 of which (92.1%) cover workers' rights and claims made by various non-independent organisations, from international footballers to NGOs, to the UN's reports.</p>	<p><i>The Times</i> ran a piece named Dying for the World Cup on reports of migrant workers reporting chronic kidney disease on returning home.</p> <p><i>The Times</i> also refers to 2022 as 'the most controversial', but spends more time discussing the party arrangements made for fans – and also mentioned a David Beckham media row.</p> <p>Of the 563 articles on <i>The Times'</i> online presence that discuss workers'-rights related issues, most of these articles report news on external organisations' negative views on human rights allegations against Qatar – namely Amnesty International and the Norwegian football team, among others.</p>	<p><i>The Express'</i> piece on Qatar 2022 focused on who can play, and the football at hand.</p> <p>Story behind the Qatar World Cup and the legacy it will leave behind</p>  <p><i>The Express'</i> Political Editor David Maddox described the truth as being 'very different from the allegations' and described the progress Qatar made in workers' rights reforms, which had been sped through thanks to the global spotlight on the games.</p> <p>The vast majority of articles relating to the Qatar World Cup on <i>The Express</i> surround the actual football content of the event, with fewer geopolitical implications discussed.</p>	<p><i>la Repubblica</i> said of the games that a delegation commented there was "clear progress, but still a lot to do".</p> <p>Qatar, little progress in the protection of migrant workers: the government does not keep promises of reform</p> <p>LR also ran a piece critical of the Qatari government's reforms to ameliorate the situation, writing that there was 'little progress in the protection of migrant workers'.</p> <p><i>la Repubblica</i> also discusses corruption in FIFA and the allegations surrounding former FIFA President Sepp Blatter.</p> <p><i>la Repubblica</i> mostly discussed the football at hand in their coverage of the Qatar games.</p> <p>The majority of <i>la Repubblica's</i> coverage – like <i>The Express'</i> – surrounded sport.</p>	<p><i>Die Welt</i> ran a piece describing foreign workers as going through 'inhuman suffering' as well as alleged concerns about Qatar, including that it is 'too small, the air is too warm, alcohol is not widely available'</p>  <p>Amnesty denounces human rights abuses in World Cup host country Qatar</p> <p>A good year before the start of the World Cup in Qatar, Amnesty International has again criticized the working conditions for construction workers in the emirate. Qatar has introduced a number of reforms since 2017, but these are not being adequately implemented.</p> <p>52 sec</p> <p><i>Die Welt</i> featured criticism from Amnesty and described the games as having a 'human rights scandal'.</p> <p>Axel Springer publication <i>Bild</i> ran a piece describing the different ways the Sheikh was preparing for the 2022 Games in 2010 and raised allegations of FIFA corruption.</p>

	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>The Times</i>	<i>Express</i>	<i>la Repubblica</i>	<i>Die Welt / Bild</i>
2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing	<p>This is the sports event where workers' rights-based criticism is most clear.</p> <p>Of the 28 articles on <i>The Guardian</i> covering the Beijing Winter Olympics, only 13 (46.43%) mentioned rights-related criticism, most of which was reporting on the US-led diplomatic boycott.</p> <p><i>The Guardian</i> ran a piece on Beijing 2022 describing the different Olympians 'to watch out for', while also adding criticism of the boycott from World Athletics President Lord Coe in another piece.</p>	<p><i>The Times</i> ran an opinion piece on the impact of US-China trade relations on the Beijing games.</p>  <p>The biggest competition at the Beijing Olympics is over Chinese and US trade</p> <p><i>The Times</i> also refers to China's anger over the UK boycott of the Beijing games, referring to the issues at hand cited by the UK.</p> <p><i>The Times</i> has 11 articles on the Beijing games and they largely surround the progress of the diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Olympics, including opinion columns from Alicia Kearns MP and Matthew Syed, and articles <i>Expressing</i> the views of those supporting the boycott – and urging their governments to do so, such as those of US Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Ai Weiwei.</p>	<p><i>The Express</i> ran a piece on how Britain was urged to follow the US in boycotting the Winter Olympics, which it ultimately did, including quotes from Alicia Kearns MP.</p> <p>Britain urged to follow US with snub to China over Beijing Olympics</p>  <p>Most of <i>The Express</i> coverage on the Beijing Olympics – in contrast with their coverage of the Qatar games, discusses the strict Covid restrictions, such as the no-spectators policy and rigorous testing that will take place at the 2022 games.</p>	<p><i>la Repubblica</i> discussed the no-spectator Covid regulations applied to the Beijing Olympics, as well as criticism of the travel regulations.</p> <p><i>la Repubblica</i> also ran a piece on a pro-Tibet protest that took place at the lighting of the Olympic torch in Greece.</p>  <p><i>la Repubblica</i> also described the discussion of boycotts as being 'a cotton war between the U.S. and China', particularly pertaining to American questions as to whether Olympic uniforms were made using semi-enslaved or child labour.</p> <p>Apart from that, there was not significant coverage of the Beijing Olympics,</p>	<p>Axel Springer's <i>Die Welt</i> ran a piece questioning the effectiveness of Covid measures in China and using the Beijing games as a backdrop for this.</p> <p>In <i>Die Welt</i>, there is overwhelmingly more content focused on the actual sport and the conditions of the games, than there is when it comes to talk of boycotts – the proportion of articles on human rights or boycotts here is much less than in their coverage of the Qatar World Cup.</p> <p>Out of around 33 articles on the Beijing Olympics, largely 6 discuss the topic of boycotts and human rights allegations – some of which is just reporting of other governments' decisions to boycott it.</p> <p><i>Die Welt</i> also mentions the controversy over the choice of Beijing writing that there was active debate on it, but this does not make up the majority of the piece.</p>

	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>The Times</i>	<i>The Express</i>	<i>la Repubblica</i>	<i>Die Welt / Bild</i>
2018 World Cup in Russia	<p><i>The Guardian</i> ran a piece critical of FIFA and the process by which Russia won the 2018 world cup tournament, amidst the allegations of internal corruption.</p> <p><i>The Guardian</i> also ran a piece questioning whether the investment in World Cup infrastructure paid off, writing that there was 'no clear path to financial viability in the next half-decade'.</p> <p><i>The Guardian</i> also published an op-ed by Peter Tatchell, albeit one not in the news section relating to the 2018 games. Tatchell criticised the Russian government's record on LGBT rights and homophobia in Russia, writing that 'Russia should not be allowed to bask in World Cup glory while abusing LGBT+ people.'</p>	<p><i>The Times</i> ran a piece during the World Cup on whether England's team and fans will be safe from racism in Russia, in particular Russian neo-Nazis that had been photographed at various football matches, including one of Russian fans holding a flag with a swastika.</p> <p><i>The Times</i>' other major piece also focuses on racism at the Russia World Cup games, describing it as part of 'a long list of concerns' Russia was keen to play down.</p> <p><i>The Times</i> also focused more coverage on FIFA corruption, running a piece on FIFA Executive Jack Warner meeting with President Putin in advance of FIFA's selection of Russia as a location.</p> <p>On <i>The Times</i> website, mentions of 'FIFA 2018 corruption' yielded 537 results</p>	<p><i>The Express</i> ran a piece on the 2018 World Cup, with the headline 'Workers left unpaid, dangerous conditions, and whistleblowers punished', quoting an official from Human Rights Watch. The purpose was to run contrary to the FIFA monitoring system and FIFA's claims it helped improve labour conditions – a claim which HRW disagrees with.</p> <p><i>The Express</i> also published a piece on then-Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson comparing the 2018 World Cup to the 1936 Berlin Olympics. This was especially in light of the Salisbury poisonings. This also largely concerned the safety of fans, with quotes from then-Labour MP Ian Austin, among others, on fan safety.</p> <p>There were no articles by <i>The Express</i> on Russia's human rights record as such.</p>	<p><i>la Repubblica</i> quoted a Bloomberg piece on the devaluing of the Russian ruble and how that will make prices lower for travellers to Russia over the World Cup period.</p>  <p>IL CASO Invasione di campo in finale Rivendicano le Pussy Riot</p> <p><i>la Repubblica</i> also ran one piece – an exception from the overall trend in reporting – discussing a protest from the feminist protest punk rock group Pussy Riot.</p> <p>Overall, <i>la Repubblica</i>'s coverage of the 2018 World Cup mainly focused on the sports element, but to a lesser extent than their Qatar coverage, spoke on human rights complaints, protests, etc.</p>	<p><i>Die Welt</i>'s coverage of the 2018 World Cup mainly focused on allegations of racism within the German football team (DFB) from player Mezut Özil.</p>  <p>OPINION SELF-PORTRAITAL The World Cup couldn't have gone better for patron Putin For years, Vladimir Putin did everything he could to get the World Cup to go to Russia. As soon as it started, he disappeared from the scene. This is part of a plan that worked, above all, domestically.</p> <p>Christopher Cologne 23</p> <p>Out of the 73 articles from <i>Die Welt</i> covering the 2018 World Cup, only one mentioned President Putin, and suggested the games were a success.</p> <p><i>Bild</i> was responsible for unveiling the Garcia report into FIFA corruption – in particular relating to the awarding of host countries. In terms of human rights, there was not much coverage of human rights controversies, particularly Putin's government, not compared to <i>The Guardian</i> or <i>The Times</i>, both of which heavily focused on domestic social issues.</p>

Appendix II:

The World Cup and Progress: A summary of reforms in Qatar

***“Sport has the power to
change the world.”***

Nelson Mandela

The FIFA Ethics and Regulations Watch survey found that the vast majority of migrant workers in Qatar, 95%, thought that awarding the World Cup had improved their human and labour rights. Indeed, unlike countries such as China, sport has been a catalyst for positive reform. The aims first outlined in 2009 to progress towards international accepted labour standards was accelerated by Qatar winning the right to host the 2022 tournament. Of greatest importance is the dismantling of the Kafala system which gave employers too much control over their workers through making their visa subject to their continued employment with their sponsoring company. The requirement for the approval of the current employer before changing jobs was also phased out. Ending those restrictive practices has liberalised Qatar’s labour market and should also boost economic output as well as improve human rights. Access to law courts and tribunals has also been improved as has a system to protect workers’ wages.

On the following pages, courtesy of the Democracy Centre for Transparency ⁴⁰, is a summary of the reforms that Qatar has introduced. These are as a direct

⁴⁰ <https://dctransparency.com/uae-pr-machine-promote-fake-news-on-qatar-world-cup-push-for-european-boycott/>

consequence of the World Cup being awarded to that small desert nation, surrounded by water on three sides. Sport can change the world.

The Workers' Charter

Labour standards were initially improved through the Workers' Charter in 2013 that, in turn, formed the blueprint for the Workers' Welfare Standards (WWS) published in 2014, and subsequently updated in 2016 and 2018.

The WWS are embedded in the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy of the Qatar FIFA World Cup's (SC) tendering process and are contractually binding. They were developed to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of their workers through three key pillars covering ethical recruitment, accommodation, and the work environment. The SC continuously monitors the impact of their standards on workers, and the progress they are making in enhancing their wellbeing. This is done through a comprehensive reporting system – conducted both internally, as well as through their external monitor, Impactt Ltd.

Universal reimbursement scheme

There are over 25 million people worldwide affected by the practice of charging recruitment fees, which is illegal under international law, Qatari law, and is prohibited by their WWS. Many of the workers have inevitably paid recruitment fees in their home countries but are unable to provide any proof – hindering reimbursement by their employers.

Through the SC's universal reimbursement scheme, the SC has shifted the burden of proof from workers to contractors, ensuring workers are fully reimbursed. As a result, workers are now able to better support their families and build a future for themselves.

Eleven of their contractors have extended this scheme to non-SC workers, demonstrating the human and social legacy of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

- 48,814 SC and non-SC workers are projected to receive QAR102.5 million, of which QAR 78.2 million has been reimbursed.
- 47,230 hours spent on ethical recruitment audits since 2016.

Grievance mechanisms (Access to Remedy)

The organizing committee of the World Cup introduced access to remedy mechanisms, including the appointment of Workers' Welfare Officers on all their programmes, and the establishment of a flagship grievance mechanism, Workers' Welfare Forums. The forums allow workers to elect workers' representatives to speak on their behalf about any concerns they have without fear of retaliation. The legacy of this initiative goes beyond the SC environment as 12 contractors have decided to implement the forums for more than 12,590 non-world cup workers. The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs (MoADLSA) have also shown interest in the SC model having observed several forums and representatives' elections, with the aim of replicating their model nation-wide. The SC has also set up a Grievance Hotline, so workers can report any concerns directly and anonymously.

Project Worker Welfare Forums (PWWF)

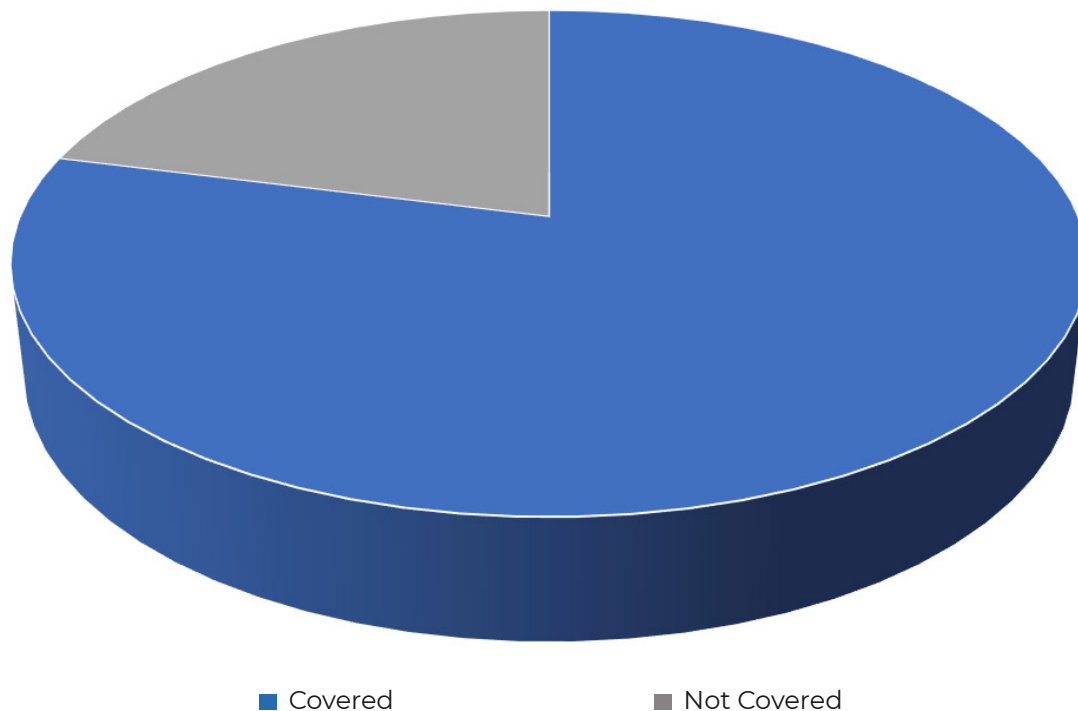


Figure 14

- 86 operational WWF and three Project Workers' Welfare Forums (PWWF).
- 13,100+ workers covered by the forums – 79% of the SC current workforce.
- 12 contractors are conducting WWF for non-SC workers – covering 12,590 workers.
- The SC WWD attended 328 online video conferencing meetings with WWF representatives during April 2020 to January 2021, out of approximately 500+ online WWF meetings.
- A total of 874 grievances have been lodged via the hotline, 865 of which have already been resolved – 98.9%.

WWD Complaints Lodged

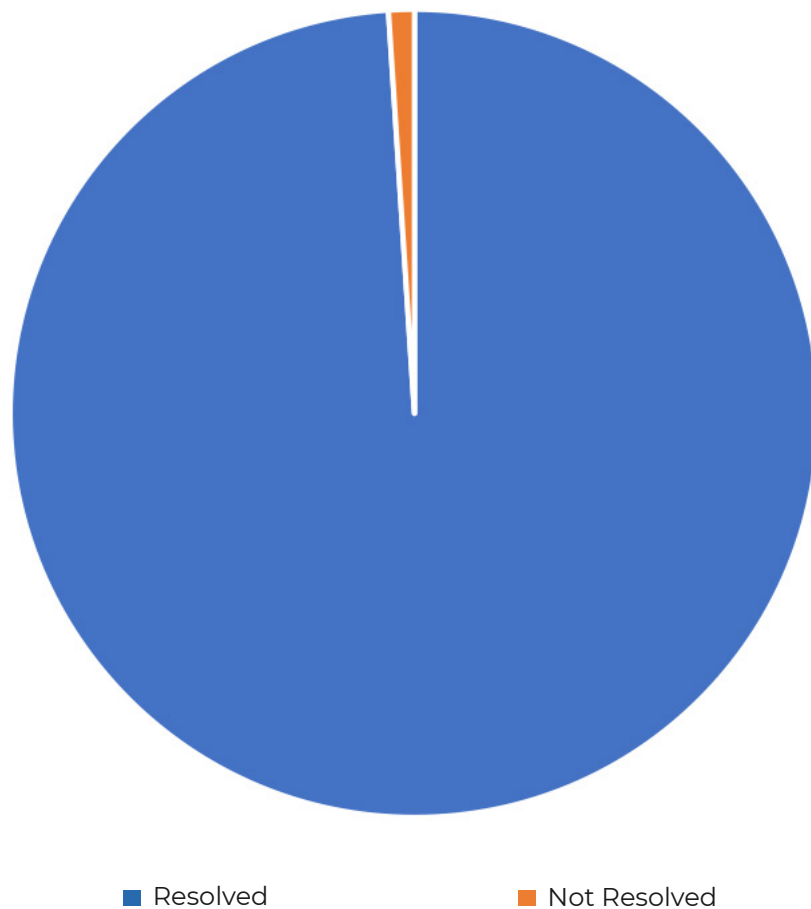


Figure 15

Electronic health records

In early 2018, the SC collaborated with The Phoenix Partnership (TPP) to set up electronic medical records system. This is a first-of-its-kind healthcare initiative for workers in Qatar, offering workers a single medical record that any health practitioner can access. All SC workers registered on the system undergo a comprehensive medical screening carried out by Qatar Red Crescent (QRC) and funded by the SC. The results form part of their centralised medical records, which can be accessed by clinics at the stadiums and accommodation sites, as well as QRC-operated health centres.

- 27,544 comprehensive medical screenings conducted in partnership with QRC.
- To date, 95,561 workers have registered with TPP, of which 14,554 workers are currently active.

Nutrition programme

Through their partnership with Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar (WCMQ), the Qataris delivered a first-of-its-kind Nutrition Programme to improve dietary habits and raise awareness of the importance of health amongst the workers. WCMQ experts assess around 1,500 workers each year and provide them with training and awareness on leading a healthier lifestyle. They are also utilising their nutrition expertise to develop healthier menu options on site and in their accommodation, in collaboration with contractors and catering supply companies.

- Year 1 health assessments (1,050 workers); workers' awareness day (700+ attendees); print/video awareness campaign distributed at accommodation and construction sites; new menus developed, costed out and final report submitted.
- Year 2 health assessments (1,379 workers); training and awareness sessions completed for 1,379 workers and contractors in January and March 2020; and virtual training for caterers administered to 27 catering staff serving contractors at Asian City in September 2020.

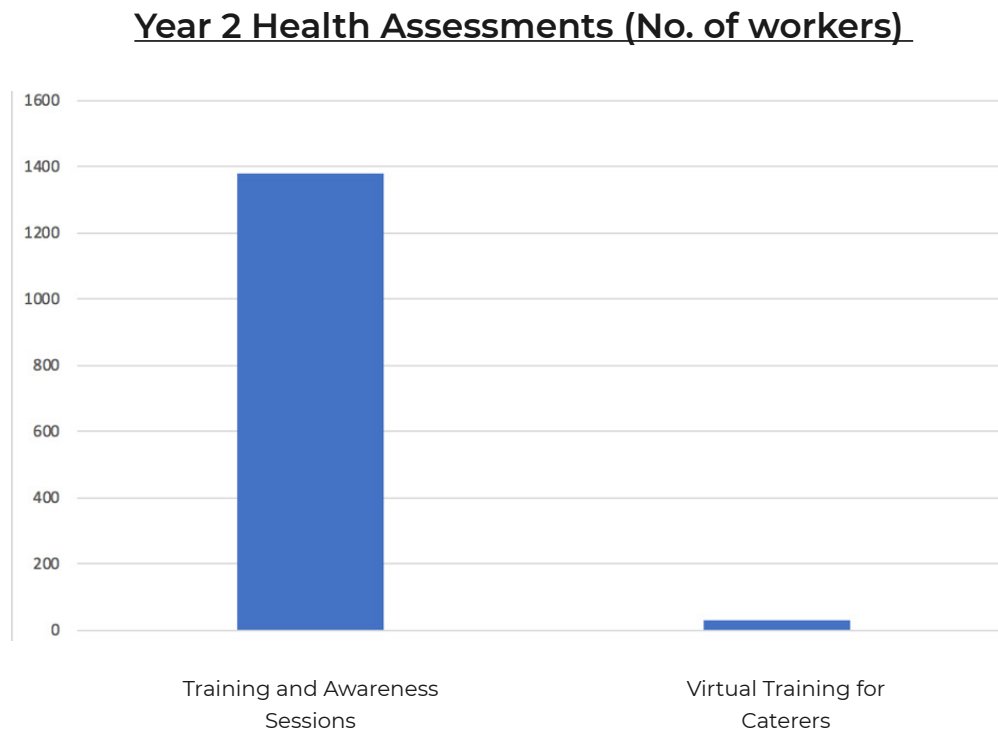


Figure 16

- WCM-Q submitted winter health screening plan and currently finalising visual elements of the awareness campaign which will be distributed across sites and accommodation at a later stage.
- Communications campaign approved, including posters, roll-ups and an animation translated into 10 languages. In 2021, materials were distributed across work sites and in their accommodation.

Mental health

The SC collaborated with Qatar's Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) to develop a dedicated mental health care pathway for their workers to eliminate barriers in seeking mental health support. The pathway includes targeted screenings and dedicated clinics providing free consultation and treatment for workers. Over 4,000+ workers have been screened to date.

Heat stress study

The SC collaborated in a major study commissioned by the ILO and MoADLSA to study the impact of heat stress on workers in Qatar. The summer 2019 research was carried out by heat stress experts FAME Lab and covered different shifts, nationalities, work designations, and ages at an SC site. The study demonstrated that the SC operates comprehensive heat stress management plans, with a raft of preventative measures already in place. This includes empowering workers to self-monitor and pace their workload, according to weather conditions.

StayQool

As part of their heat mitigation strategies, the SC has collaborated with TechNiche and Hamad bin Khalifa University (HBKU) in Qatar to develop a revolutionary bespoke cooling suit 'StayQool' designed to replace outdated construction coveralls. StayQool can reduce thermal skin temperature by a maximum of 8°C, helping workers to stay cool and comfortable during the summer months.



StayQool outfits (Source: Qatar2022.qa)

Figure 17

- More than 50,000 suits have been issued in a phased deployment, along with 20,000 balaclavas.
- 28,000 StayQool suits deployed by end of summer 2020.
- 3,500 cooling vests distributed to SC workers in 2018.
- 10,000 cooling towels distributed to SC workers in 2017.

Workers' app

Qatar have launched a dedicated mobile application for workers to provide a variety of services to improve their day-to-day lives in Qatar. The app includes finance and remittance functions, leisure and social activity information, health and nutrition advice, storage of personal documents, amongst a host of other features.

Training and upskilling

Workers' health and safety is a top priority for the SC. Qatar partnered with Qatar International Safety Centre (QISC) to develop workers' technical and soft skills to equip them for the future, while also improving job performance and safety. Their training courses aim to ensure all workers are offered a smooth transition into working and living in Qatar through a comprehensive induction that covers information of their rights, access to remedy, cultural awareness, and trade-specific health and safety awareness.

- Eight key courses have been rolled out for workers and key contractor since 2017. Contract with QISC ended in October 2019 with a total of 20,671 workers trained.

A new agreement started for year 2020 with a total of 2,022 people trained as per the following information.

Training and Upskilling for Qatar 2022 employees

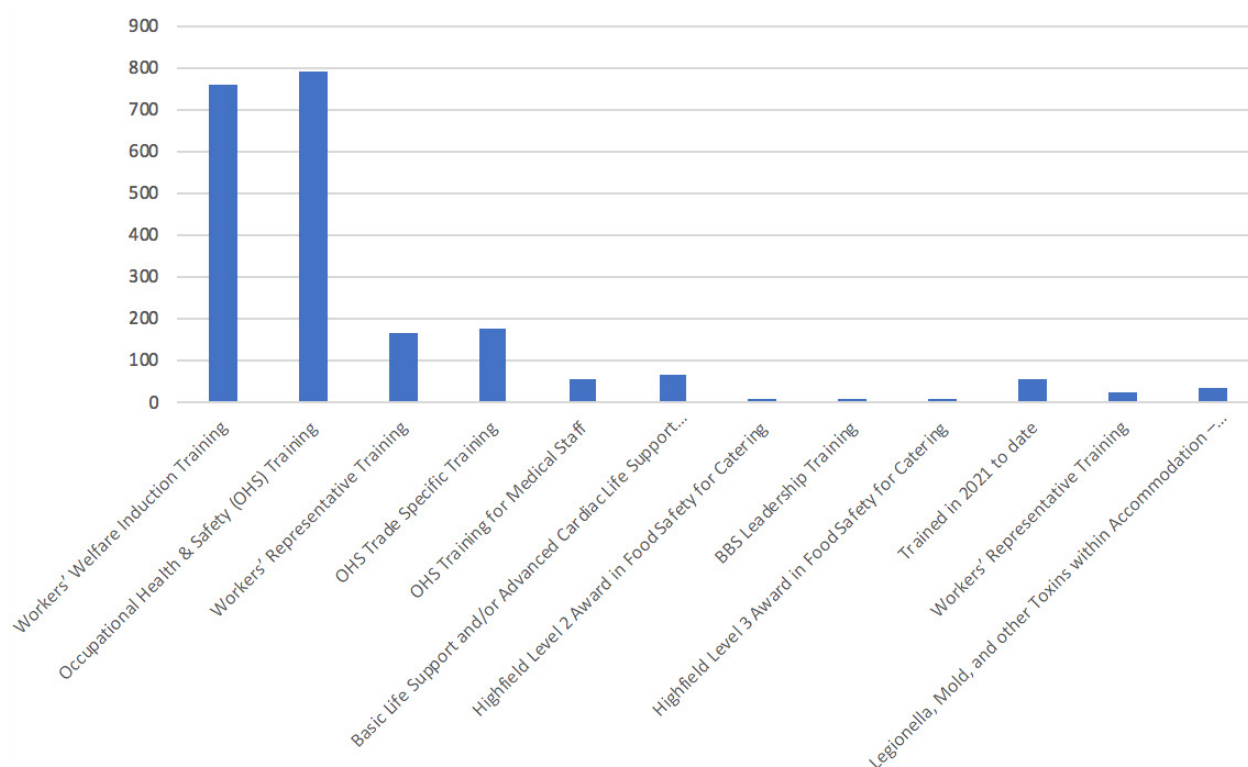


Figure 18

- 760 workers received the Workers' Welfare Induction Training.
- 790 workers received Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Training.
- 166 workers received Workers' Representative Training.
- 177 workers received OHS Trade Specific Training.
- 55 clinicians received OHS Training for Medical Staff.
- 67 clinicians completed Basic Life Support and/or Advanced Cardiac Life Support Training.
- 1 HSE staff member received Highfield Level 2 Award in Food Safety for Catering.
- 3 HSE staff members received BBS Leadership Training.
- 3 HSE staff members received Highfield Level 3 Award in Food Safety for Catering.

- 57 people trained in 2021 to date.
- 23 workers received Workers' Representative Training.
- 31 camp facilities management and 3 WWD HSE personnel received Legionella, Mold, and other Toxins within Accommodation – Awareness Training.

COVID-19 measures

In common with the rest of the world, the COVID-19 pandemic presented an unprecedented challenge for the SC. Their first priority was to keep workers safe and minimise the spread of infection. They quickly implemented a range of proactive measures, in line with COVID-19 safety guidelines recommended by Qatar's MoPH.

They immediately implemented disinfection protocols at their medical facilities, and established quarantine rooms at all SC sites and accommodation. Qatar ensured every project site received masks and sanitisers, and that their workers were social distancing. High-risk workers who had chronic diseases and/or were above 55 years were immediately demobilised and relocated to a centralised accommodation facility. They continued to receive their salaries and other benefits, including free food and accommodation.

Their proactive strategy enabled Qatar to manage the spread of COVID-19 on their projects for up to six weeks until the first case was reported. They leveraged the existing network of medical clinics across all SC sites and accommodation to provide medical care. In May 2020, the SC established a 1,000-bed capacity Isolation facility, with the guidance and approval of MoPH. The WWS-compliant facility enabled the SC to monitor and maintain strict quarantine protocols while treating workers infected with COVID-19 and minimise the spread of infection. On

13th August 2020, the Isolation Facility was closed following a significant drop in the number of active cases.

Throughout the pandemic, the Workers' Welfare team has maintained constant communication with workers to raise awareness of the various precautionary measures in place for their safety. They also worked closely with specialists at the MoPH and the Mental Health Service at HMC to develop a mental health awareness campaign, to provide support through these challenging times. As part of the campaign, Qatar delivered five videos with mental health professionals and four infographics to raise awareness on stress, anxiety, social isolation, depression, wellbeing and physical health. This content was translated into eight languages and distributed to more than 18,000 workers via SMS. For maximum impact they also shared this content with 15 embassies with high numbers of workers in Qatar, to be passed on to SC and non-SC workers. Qatar also developed a COVID-19 awareness app that to date has already had over 207,000 downloads.

Qatari authorities are working closely with their contractors to ensure strict compliance with safety protocols so that workers are protected at all times.

- 300,000 masks distributed to 19,000 workers.
- 285 COVID-19 site welfare inspections since March 2020.
- 785 workers treated in the SC Isolation Facility throughout COVID-19.

Evidence regarding those improvements was investigated and evaluated by the FIFA Ethics and Regulations Watch delegation.

