



READING COMPREHENSION

Read the following text and do the exercises below.

FIFA SUED OVER TREATMENT OF QATAR WORLD CUP WORKERS

A Bangladeshi man who says he was harshly exploited while working on 2022 World Cup facilities in Qatar is suing FIFA for allegedly failing to use its influence to ensure workers are treated fairly. The Gulf state has faced criticism of its treatment of foreign workers from Amnesty International, the Building and Wood Workers' International organization and others.

The suit, which was launched in Zurich, with the backing of the largest labour union in the Netherlands, calls on FIFA to force Qatar to adopt minimum labour standards for migrant workers preparing for the tournament, including, at least, the right to quit a job or leave the country.

Leading the Swiss suit is 21-year-old Nadim Shariful Alam, seeking around \$11,500 in compensation for a deal in which he paid \$4,000 to a recruiter. On arrival in Qatar, his passport was taken away and he was forced to work for 18 months under harsh conditions. He unloaded ships carrying construction materials, and paid for meals at the large workers' camp where he was confined. He says he was then fired and deported, having earned too little to even repay the original recruitment fee.

FIFA did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the case. A Qatar government spokesman had no immediate comment. The Dutch Federation of Trade Unions said FIFA should take responsibility, as it has the power to grant or withhold hosting deals.

Labour law reforms

"In Qatar, they're going to allow alcohol in the country during the World Cup. Can you imagine that in a Muslim country?", FNV lawyer Liesbeth Zegveld said. Public drinking is usually banned but will be permitted in "fan zones" during the tournament. "How difficult would it be for them to say that all companies that don't pay adequately,

that force people to remain in the country when they want to leave, will face large fines?" It is likely to be more than a year before there is a judgment in the case, she said.

On Monday, Qatar's government launched a campaign to educate foreign workers about imminent reforms of its widely-criticised labour laws. Under the current system, foreign workers are required to seek their employer's consent to change jobs or leave the country. From December, workers will be able to appeal to the government if their employer does not give permission to leave the country. Critics say the reform is not a major one and workers will still find it hard to change jobs or travel.

Gas-rich Qatar is pursuing a \$200 billion infrastructure upgrade ahead of the 2022 World Cup and has recruited hundreds of thousands of workers from countries such as India, Nepal and Bangladesh. Foreign workers outnumber the local workforce by nearly 20 to one and can be jailed or deported for forming unions or holding protests.

Worksheet

1. FIFA has been accused of...

- a. Exploiting workers on 2022 World Cup facilities in Qatar
- b. Ensuring workers are treated justly on 2022 World Cup facilities in Qatar
- c. Not guaranteeing workers' just treatment on 2022 World Cup facilities in Qatar

2. According to workers' rights...

- a. They can leave their jobs and are able to travel whenever and wherever they want to.
- b. They can neither leave their jobs nor travel whenever and wherever they want to.
- c. They are forced to quit their jobs and remain in the country when they want to leave.

3. Lawyer Liesbeth Zegveld thinks that...

- a. Drinking alcohol would not be allowed during the World Cup if it was held in a Muslim country.
- b. Drinking alcohol would be allowed during the World Cup too if it took place in a Muslim country.
- c. Allowing drinking alcohol in any World Cup is unacceptable

4. Where do workers in Qatar come from?

- a. They come mostly from foreign countries.
- b. They come mostly from Qatar.
- c. The workforce is mostly local.