

Ahead Of Israel Soccer Expulsion Vote, U.S. Orders Swiss Police Raid On FIFA

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Global Research, May 29, 2015

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Region: [Europe, USA](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#)

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Today the U.S. ordered Swiss police to raid, incarcerate and extradite to the U.S. [six FIFA officials for alleged corruption](#). The raid, with obviously pre-alarmed New York Times reporters on the scene, comes shortly before a FIFA vote to expel Israel from the association.

This Friday the world football association FIFA is meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, for its 65th regular [World Congress](#). One of the votes on [the agenda](#) (pdf) is about the "Suspension or expulsion of a member". There is also an "Update on Israel-Palestine".

The Palestinian Football Association has [called for a vote](#) to suspend Israel from FIFA:

The Palestinian group objects to Israeli teams playing in the West Bank. They also say Israel restricts movements of Palestinian players between the West Bank and Gaza as well as for international matches. "They keep bullying here and there, and I think they have no right to keep being the bully of the neighborhood," Palestinian Football Association President Jibril Rajoub said of Israel. "If the Israelis are using the issue of security, I can say that their security concern is mine. I am ready to fix parameters for security concerns, but security should not be used ... as a tool in order to keep this racist, apartheid policies."

He declared the situation in the West Bank far worse than apartheid that existed in South Africa because right-wingers and extremists in Israel want to "delete Palestine." In the 1960s, FIFA suspended South Africa for decades after it failed to comply with the association's nondiscrimination policies. The nation was also expelled from FIFA a month after the Soweto Youth Uprising of 1976.

"I am not asking for the suspension of the Israeli association; I am asking to end the suffering of the Palestinian footballers," Rajoub said. "I am asking to end the grievances, the humiliation we are facing."

The vote requires a 75% majority of the 209 FIFA members. There was a good chance that it was going to be successful.

But now, *just by chance*, the U.S. government ordered the Swiss police [to raid](#) the hotel where the main FIFA functionaries are residing to arrest some of them on corruption charges going back to the early 1990s. The U.S. wants these to be extradited to face a U.S. court.

Also, *just by chance*, reporters and photographers of the New York Times [happen to be](#) in that very Swiss hotel lobby, at 6 am, to capture the incident [live](#):

As leaders of FIFA, soccer's global governing body, gathered for their annual meeting, more than a dozen plain-clothed Swiss law enforcement officials arrived unannounced at the Baur au Lac hotel, an elegant five-star property with views of the Alps and Lake Zurich. They went to the front desk to get keys and proceeded upstairs to the rooms.

...

The charges allege widespread corruption in FIFA over the past two decades, involving bids for World Cups as well as marketing and broadcast deals, according to three law enforcement officials with direct knowledge of the case. The charges include wire fraud, racketeering and money laundering, and officials said they targeted members of FIFA's powerful executive committee, which wields enormous power and does its business largely in secret.

While [some](#) of the indicted persons are U.S. citizens one wonders what contorted maneuvers the U.S. justice department will make to claim jurisdiction over foreign national FIFA functionaries:

United States law gives the Justice Department wide authority to bring cases against foreign nationals living abroad, an authority that prosecutors have used repeatedly in international terrorism cases. Those cases can hinge on the slightest connection to the United States, like the use of an American bank or Internet service provider.

Is there corruption involved when FIFA decides to run the World Championship in this or that country? Are there kickbacks when it sells media rights? Might there be gambling going on in [the casino](#)?

Rick: How can you close me up? On what grounds? Captain Renault: I'm shocked, shocked to find that gambling is going on in here! [a croupier hands Renault a pile of money] Croupier: Your winnings, sir. Captain Renault: Oh, thank you very much.

Additional to their U.S. ordered raid the Swiss also feel compelled to [open criminal proceedings](#) around the 2018 and 2022 World Cup FIFA votes. The U.S. lost out against Russia and Qatar in its bid for those games and U.S. hawks still [want to change](#) that. It is [not](#) that paying bribes to be chosen for world games is unfamiliar to the U.S., but being rejected necessitates regime change at the top of the responsible organization.

In the United States it is legal to bribe politicians, via campaign financing, in practically unlimited amounts. Not one U.S. banker has been indicted for the massive Wall Street fraud that brought the world economy to a halt. The world is aware of this and it does not like the U.S. to lecture it about moral outrages. FIFA, while certainly corrupt, is also the soul of world football and the organizer of the most beloved championship in the world. If the U.S. believes that using something similar to terrorism charges against FIFA will have a positive echo in the world it is very mistaken.

Especially as the *just by chance* motive for this is pretty obvious.

As an Israeli journalist already [gloats](#):

Anshel Pfeffer

Poor Jibril Rajoub. Doesn't look like his gimmick is going to get much attention right now #FIFA

Let me guess: That was a main purpose of this raid?

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