

## Special report

# FIFA Must Correct Its Double Standard

**FIFA moves quickly and forcefully to punish all acts of discrimination and racism throughout world football, yet it ignores Palestinian football's institutionalized discrimination, glorification of terror and terror promotion.**

*This special report contrasts FIFA's inaction on PMW's complaint against the Palestinian Football Association's serious violations of fundamental FIFA statutes with FIFA's swift and forceful punishments, even for relatively minor violations, by other teams or their fans.*

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### **FIFA's double standard**

In April 2017, PMW submitted a complaint to both the Disciplinary Committee and the Ethics Committee of FIFA against the Palestinian Football Association (PFA) and its president Jibril Rajoub. The [full complaint](#) documents the repeated violations by the PFA and Rajoub, which include explicit encouragement of terror, glorifying terrorist murderers of civilians, sponsoring sporting events named after killers, referring to Jews as "satans" and "Zionist sons of bitches," and much more.

PMW's complaint documented that the PFA is in violation of at least Articles 3 and 4 of the FIFA Statutes and Articles 53 and 58 of the FIFA Disciplinary Code, and the potential punishments include "suspension or expulsion," and a minimum fine of 30,000 Swiss Francs. Although PMW received notification that our complaint was received and was being reviewed, and despite a number of follow-up inquiries, until today, PMW has not been invited to give testimony and no disciplinary action has been taken against the PFA or Jibril Rajoub.

FIFA has a clear double standard when responding to violations of its statutes. PMW has reviewed hundreds of decisions of the Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS) (the highest court for sport) and has learned that FIFA and the football community act forcefully to punish even minor violations when committed by

other football clubs or even their fans. Yet the PFA's and Rajoub's racism and terror promotion, all serious violations, are being ignored by FIFA.

**PMW is calling on FIFA to end this double standard and immediately sanction the Palestinian Football Association and its president for their violations.**

### **FIFA precedents of FIFA acting against violations:**

The following are some of the violations by teams or their supporters that brought penalties against football teams and players. These cases were initially heard by FIFA, or UEFA, Union of European Football Associations, a branch of FIFA, and subsequently brought to final decision at CAS - Court of Arbitration for Sports.

### **Croatian player fined 30,000 euros and suspended for ten matches for odious chant**

- **CAS 2014/A/3562 Josip Simunic v. Fédération Internationale de Football Association**

Josip Simunic, a professional footballer on the Croatian national team, went to the center of the field with a microphone and yelled at the fans "U boj, u boj!" (to the battle!), "za dom!" (for the homeland!). The fans replied by shouting "Spremni!" (We are ready!). FIFA identified such words as being the war call used by the Ustaše, the Croatian pro-Nazi regime that ruled the state during World War II, and found the player guilty of "offending the dignity of a group of persons by using discriminatory words."

It's important to note, that the action in FIFA's disciplinary committee was initiated by a private organization, like PMW, named FARE (Football Against Racism in Europe). The decision of FIFA's disciplinary committee was handed down in **less than a month** from the event and receipt of the complaint.

In its decision, CAS, at the request of FIFA, rejected Simunic's appeal and approved the decision to **suspend him for ten official matches, banned him from entering the confines of the stadiums for those ten matches and also fined him 30,000 Swiss Francs.**

### **Croatian team fined 90,000 euros for behavior of its fans**

- **CAS 2013/A/3324 GNK Dinamo v. UEFA and CAS 2013/A/3369 GNK Dinamo v. UEFA**

In the course of a number of games, spectators of GNK Dinamo, a Croatian team that is a member of the Croatian Football Federation, performed chants

containing the line "Mamicu cigane, odlazi iz svetinje" (English: "gypsy, get out of our temple"). The addressee of the chants was the executive chairman of the fans' own club.

UEFA's disciplinary responses were handed down within a month of the first incident and two months after the second incident.

In its ruling, CAS decided to uphold the decision of the UEFA Disciplinary Committee to **fine the club 90,000 euros and one match in a UEFA competition to be played behind closed doors.**

### **Dutch team fined 50,000 euros for behavior of its fans**

- **CAS 2015/A/4256 Feyenoord Rotterdam N.V. v. Union des Associations Européennes de Football (UEFA).**

During a match, supporters of Feyenoord threw an inflatable banana of about 115 cm in length and 30 cm in diameter onto the field. This action was understood by UEFA as racist behavior by Feyenoord's supporters.

The initial decision of UEFA's disciplinary committee was handed down within three months of the incident.

In its decision, CAS upheld the UEFA decision ordering Feyenoord Rotterdam N.V. to pay a **fine of 50,000 euros.**

### **Dutch National team fined 7,500 Swiss Francs for behavior of Romanian National team's fans**

- **CAS 2014/A/3578 Koninklijke Nederlandse Voetbalbond (KNVB) v. Fédération Internationale de Football Association**

During a match between the Dutch and Romanian national teams played in the Netherlands, Romanian fans displayed a banner containing a political message.

The action against the Dutch national team was immediately initiated by FIFA, and the decision of FIFA's disciplinary committee was handed down **within two months of the incident.**

In its decision, CAS reiterated the principle of strict liability of the Dutch team even for the actions of the fans of the Romanian team and decided to fine the Dutch team 7,500 Swiss Francs.

These are just a few of the many cases in which punitive action has been taken for disciplinary violations in football. In contrast, the actions of the PFA and its president

Jibril Rajoub are demonstrably more violent and discriminatory than any of the above examples. Furthermore, while the above examples dealt with individual fans or players whose teams were sanctioned for their actions, PMW's complaint documents violations by the Palestinian Football Association itself and its president.

***The following are a few of the many examples that appear in PMW's complaint to FIFA against the PFA and its president Rajoub:***

Citing Articles 3 and 4 of FIFA's Statutes, and articles 53 and 58 of FIFA's Disciplinary code, and based on the documentation gathered by PMW, the complaint documents the PFA and its president's use and abuse of Palestinian football for:

### 1) Supporting and glorifying terrorism

- The PFA supervises an annual football tournament glorifying Palestinian terror leader Abu Jihad, who the Palestinian Authority says masterminded the killing of 125 Israelis.
- The PFA president Rajoub has called terrorist murderers "sacred" "heroes" who carried out "acts of bravery." Rajoub also said that he is "proud" of such murderers and that they are "a crown on the head of every Palestinian."



[[http://www.palwatch.org/pages/news\\_archive.aspx?doc\\_id=16434](http://www.palwatch.org/pages/news_archive.aspx?doc_id=16434)]

- Rajoub sponsored a tournament named after the terrorist Muhannad Halabi, two months after Halabi stabbed and murdered two Israeli civilians and stabbed and injured a woman and her infant in a stroller. The picture below shows Palestinian athletes standing next to the banner of the tournament, which displays the picture of the murderer Halabi on the left and right.





The words on the banner read: "Under patronage of the leader Jibril Rajoub, head of the Palestine Olympic Committee, Palestine Cup – Martyr Muhannad Halabi Table Tennis Tournament 2015."

[[http://www.palwatch.org/pages/news\\_archive.aspx?doc\\_id=16899](http://www.palwatch.org/pages/news_archive.aspx?doc_id=16899)]

- PFA teams openly show their support for terrorist murderers. Palestinian terrorist Musbah Abu Sbeih murdered 2 Israelis and wounded 5 in three drive-by shootings in Jerusalem on Oct. 9, 2016. He was honored by the PFA premier league football team **Hilal Al-Quds** with a banner praising him as the "Lion of Al-Aqsa, Martyr Musbah Abu Sbeih 'Abu Al-Izz'." The Hilal Al-Quds team was the 2016 - 2017 PFA league champion.



[[http://www.palwatch.org/pages/news\\_archive.aspx?doc\\_id=19333](http://www.palwatch.org/pages/news_archive.aspx?doc_id=19333)]

- Another example: Basel Sidr was a 19-year-old Palestinian terrorist who attempted to stab Israeli border policemen in the Old City of Jerusalem on Oct. 14, 2015. Sidr was shot and killed by the police. He was honored by PFA premier league team, **Shabab Al-Khalil**, which named a goalkeepers' academy after him. The Shabab Al-Khalil team was the 2015 - 2016 PFA league champion.  
[[http://www.palwatch.org/pages/news\\_archive.aspx?doc\\_id=16387](http://www.palwatch.org/pages/news_archive.aspx?doc_id=16387)]

## 2) [Inciting hatred and violence](#)

PFA president Jibril Rajoub saluted the terrorists who kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, and has expressed support for additional kidnappings. He openly on television encouraged terrorists to carry out attacks against Israelis. In one television appearance Rajoub said:

"No one has removed the rifle from the equation... This is a popular struggle. We still believe in all forms of the struggle. No one has removed the rifle from the equation."

[[http://www.palwatch.org/pages/news\\_archive.aspx?doc\\_id=8181](http://www.palwatch.org/pages/news_archive.aspx?doc_id=8181)]

## 3) [Promoting racism](#)

The PFA president on TV called Jews "satans" and "Zionist sons of bitches."

## 4) [Prohibiting the use of football as a bridge for peace](#)

The PFA and its president prohibit any act of normalization with Israel, including participating in joint sporting events, and threaten those who promote normalization with legal proceedings. According to Rajoub, "normalization in sports with the Zionist enemy is a crime against humanity."

These are just a few examples from among numerous pages of documentation that PMW included in its complaint to FIFA.

After PMW submitted its complaint, dozens of additional organizations as well as tens of victims of Palestinian terror submitted a copy of PMW's complaint in their own names.

Having received over 50 copies of the same well-documented complaint, and given FIFA's record of disciplining football teams who breach FIFA's Statutes and Disciplinary Code, sometimes even for minor offenses, PMW is disappointed by FIFA's inaction and open double standard.

Were FIFA to use the same standard applied to other teams to the PFA and its president, they should have fined them hundreds of thousands of francs or euros and expelled them from FIFA.

## **Conclusion**

FIFA is applying double standards in its treatment of complaints against the Palestinian Football Association compared to its treatment of complaints against football teams worldwide. When it comes to other teams, even minor complaints including violations committed by fans and not the team itself, have led to fines and disciplinary action against the teams. In the case of the Palestinian Football Association, the violations are clear and explicit and are carried out by the PFA itself and by its president Jibril Rajoub. Yet FIFA has done nothing.

To maintain its integrity and impartial leadership of the football community, PMW calls on FIFA to end this double standard and to discipline the PFA and Rajoub for their multiple and repeated violations of FIFA statutes and principles, based on the evidence in the [PMW complaint](#).