



FIFA after Blatter



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FIFA and BP: Hope for Ending Criminal Collusion with Tyranny (News, Switzerland)

"Columbian trade unionist Gilberto Torres is suing BP in London. Thirteen years ago paramilitaries kidnapped, tortured and held him for 42 days before releasing him. Now, as it is alleged that the British oil firm indirectly financed his torturers, he's suing BP for damages. ... In the same way that Gilberto Torres is suing BP in the hope that the global public will acknowledge the 42 days of injustice that completely destroyed his life, the fact that football fans are openly discussing the connection between global oppression and fiscal policy allows us to hope - if only for a day."

By Dr. Regula Stämpfli



Translated By Stephanie Martin

June 13, 2015

[News - Switzerland - Original Article \(German\)](#)

A Columbian trade unionist is [suing BP in London](#). Thirteen years ago paramilitaries kidnapped, tortured and held him for 42 days before releasing him. Now, as it is alleged that the British oil firm indirectly financed his torturers, he's suing BP for damages [video below].

BP denies any connection with the assassinations, torture, and kidnappings of trade unionists. As a minority shareholder in Columbian oil pipeline company [Ocesa](#), BP claims it had nothing to do with the operation of the pipelines. However, even Ocesa and state-oil company [Ecopetrol](#) deny any involvement, although paramilitaries testified before a Colombian court in 2011 that Ocesa ordered and supported these crimes. For years, Amnesty International has warned big Western firms against going into Columbia, since both the government and companies would threaten trade unionists through the use of paramilitaries, torture and assassination. But BP consistently refused to acknowledge any responsibility, and for the moment, the media was silent.



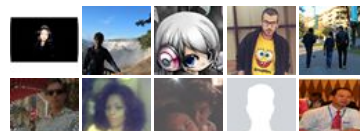
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Interactive: a detailed view of everything we know so far about the shooting, namely: what we know about the suspect, who has died and some facts on the numbers of hate crimes in the US.



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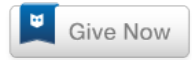
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Which brings me to the FIFA system. The systems of FIFA and BP are similar in that Western media rarely puts clear economic, sports and political ties on the agenda, i.e.: when a multinational cooperates with a dictatorship, it can be assumed that it supports that dictatorship. In this context, when a country or corporation greases the wheels with bribery, torture and oppression, allowing a business or indeed a game to continue without major obstacles, it must be clearly documented. For years, however, a conspiracy of media silence has been complicit in the unspeakable conditions created by multinational firms, organizations and governments, which are then disguised with charitable works by those same multinational firms, organizations and governments. With FIFA it is the game of football, with BP the billions donated to global health organizations.

Abstract terms like "corruption," "graft," "paramilitaries," "millions for the government," "millions for the national football association," etc. dispose of the obvious political context. Years later, as is currently the case, this makes it possible to take a few of the participants to court, but that does little to alter the essentials of this reprehensible game.

What do all these processes show us?

The commission of these crimes always requires accomplices, and silence must always be seen as abetment. Regimes committing human rights abuses can only exist due to the complicity of states, corporations and politicians from within our ranks. Every export, every agreement, every economic collaboration and every handshake with a torturer should be commented on with this in mind. The cementing of injustice through language abuse must come to an end.

Similarly, those writing free trade agreements must always be consistent in clearly and directly outlining "welfare cuts, privatization, bloodshed, abolition of animal welfare, elimination of gender equality, elimination of democracy, elimination of ecologically-friendly food production," and so on. *Real* free trade can exist only among equals, and it should always include guarantees of basic human rights, fundamental civil liberties and labor rights. As is the case with BP, for example, should it be held responsible by the London high court, one should be able to hold those who engage in trade with dictatorships responsible for transgressions that occur during any collaboration. Those who organize global football with the assistance of dictatorships always have dirt on their hands. If only the practice had gotten the media attention it deserved decades ago, consequent actions would long since have been taken against it.

As we see with FIFA, the rule of law isn't nothing, even if it

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sometimes appears as if a pawn is simply being obliged to take the fall, and - if there are convictions at all - that the law of the rich prevails (as with Formula One CEO [Bernie Ecclestone](#)). In the same way that Gilberto Torres hopes the global public will acknowledge the 42 days of injustice that completely destroyed his life, the fact that football fans are openly discussing the connection between global oppression and fiscal policy allows us to hope - if only for a day.

*[Regula Stämpfli](#) is a Swiss born political scientist based in Brussels.

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