

# [***FIFA to seek legal advice on Palestinian proposal to suspend Israel from international soccer***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C21-9G01-JC5B-G4RK-00000-00&context=1516831)

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BANGKOK — Facing a Palestinian proposal to suspend Israel from international soccer because of the conflict with Hamas, FIFA bought time Friday by agreeing to seek legal advice before holding an extraordinary council meeting within two months.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino outlined the plan to 211 member federations after leaders of the Palestinian and Israel soccer bodies spoke at the governing body's annual congress in Bangkok.

“Now, due to the obvious sensitivity of these matters, FIFA will mandate as of now independent legal expertise to analyze and assess the three requests made by the Palestinian Football Association and ensure that the statutes and regulations of FIFA are applied in the correct way in order to ensure a fair and due process,” Infantino said.

"This legal assessment will have to allow for inputs and claims of both member associations. The results and the recommendations ... will be forwarded to the FIFA council.

“Due to the urgency of the situation, an extraordinary FIFA Council will be convened and will take place before July 20 to review the results of the legal assessment and to take the decisions that are appropriate.”

The Palestinian soccer federation has now spoken at a FIFA Congress at least five times [*since 2014*](https://apnews.com/article/a5f58cf1ddf843f4bae23c058916718d) without making the progress it wants.

Palestinian soccer's issues with Israel in that decade have included travel restrictions on its players, the Israeli league including [*teams from West Bank settlements*](https://apnews.com/no-resolution-to-palestinian-dispute-with-israel-at-fifa-6bda4d2e719846ea9bfd01d7e93688fc), and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

In the past 10 years, FIFA under two different presidents has deferred a vote or decision, or created a working group to report back at a later meeting.

The [*Palestine Football Association proposal to 211 member federations*](https://apnews.com/article/fifa-congress-israel-palestinians-4a58f67daec89dd6e46edeecdd6dd0b5) called for “appropriate sanctions, with immediate effect, against Israeli teams" and was forecast in FIFA documents released last month.

The motion noted “international law violations committed by the Israeli occupation in Palestine, particularly in Gaza” and cited FIFA statutory commitments on human rights and against discrimination.

The Palestinian FA wrote that “all the football infrastructure in Gaza has been either destroyed, or seriously damaged, including the historic stadium of Al-Yarmuk.”

On Friday at the congress, Palestinian soccer's leader Jibril Rajoub said “the Palestinian people, including the Palestinian football family, are enduring an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe.”

He said 193 footballers were among the thousands of Palestinians to die in the ongoing war which [*erupted Oct. 7*](https://apnews.com/hub/israel-hamas-war) with Hamas’ deadly attack on Israel.

More than 35,000 Palestinians have been killed in the war, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its figures. About 80% of Gaza’s population have been driven from their homes.

Rajoub, who said he had been threatened because of his sanctions proposal, urged FIFA delegates not to delay the vote.

“The Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs has made serious threats to imprison me if I do not withdraw this proposal, but no power in the world can stand in the way of truth,” Rajoub said.

But Infantino said the matter couldn't go to a full vote of the membership on Friday because it had to be dealt with by FIFA’s governing council.

“I do not want to divide our 211 member countries,” he said. “I have a responsibility as president to apply the statutes of FIFA and its regulations, whatever my personal conviction on these and other terrible matters around the world.”

He said at the FIFA council meeting on Wednesday, all 37 members unanimously agreed to condemn the acts of violence that have taken place and decided to send a strong message of solidarity.

“The FIFA Council also reiterated that football should not and should never become a hostage of ***politics*** and always remain ... a force of good uniting people rather than dividing,” Infantino said.

The meeting Friday included delegates from Russia, whose national and club teams have been suspended from international competitions since the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

The legal argument put by FIFA and UEFA was the refusal of other European teams to play Russians would cause chaos in competitions.

Israel has played in UEFA competitions as a member since 1994 and no European federation has refused to play its teams.

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