

Name: Alert ID: TMML2024033411312 When at the end of May French prosecutors filed preliminary charges against Qatari businessman Yousef al-Obaidly in connection with suspected bribery, the quake rippled all the way to the United Nations headquarters in New York. Al-Obaidly, chief executive of BeIN Media, was charged in connection with suspected bribery so that his country would be successful in its bid to host the track and field world championships and the 2020 Olympic Games. French newspaper Le Monde reported in November 2016 that a former International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) official received two payments totaling around \$3.5M from Qatari investors before the vote for the 2017 world championships host nation. According to the Guardian, "disgraced IAAF marketing consultant Papa Massata Diack discussed a transfer of money in emails to an account run by Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa Al-Thani, just before the \$3.5M payments were made. Al-Thani is a member of the royal family and chief of staff to Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, who was then the crown prince and heir to the throne and became the emir of Qatar in 2013." The payments were made by Oryx Qatar Sports Investments. Al-Obaidly's media company profited substantially from broadcasting and licensing rights, because BeIN Media is closely linked to the fund. The IAAF Championships were eventually awarded to London, but the ongoing investigations highlight Qatar's flagrant disregard for international law and its use of government-sanctioned bribery. Even Qatar's own anti-corruption unit appears to be corrupt. The chairman of the board of trustees of the Qatar-based "Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption Center" (ROLACC), Ali Bin Fetais Al Marri, who is also the country's attorney general, owns several properties that are substantially outside what a civil servant in Qatar would be able to afford. On a salary of a maximum of \$12,000 per month, Al Marri has been able to purchase a €9.6M (\$10.6M) mansion in Paris, close to the Arc de Triomphe, a CHF7M (\$7.1M) villa in Cologny, Geneva's most expensive neighborhood, and an office in Geneva for CHF3.69M (\$3.74M), which Al Marri rents out to the ROLACC dependence in the Swiss city. How the ROLACC founder — and apparently chief corruption-fighter in Qatar — has been able to profit privately from letting his Geneva property to his anti-corruption agency is unclear. The office at Route de Ferney 221 was purchased in November 2015 through GSG Immobilier SA, of which Al Marri holds 99%. ROLACC and Al Marri are of international significance, and it risks making a mockery of the U.S.-backed United Nations. Indeed, ROLACC signed an agreement on fighting corruption in sports with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in January this year — two months before the charges against Yousef al-Obaidly were first made by the French courts. In 2017, the U.S. was the second main funder of the UNODC. American taxpayers should not be subsidizing unaccountable international civil servants who sign partnerships with dodgy organizations. In particular, the U.S. delegation to the U.N. should use its significant power to reform the UNODC. Congress should also revise its financial support to the UNODC in the face of state-sponsored corruption in Qatar.