

**Vancouver, Canada**

2010 Winter Olympics  
Indigenous groups in Canada protested using the slogan "no Olympics on stolen native land". When the IOC chose British Columbia to host the Winter Olympics in 2003, many people protested. In February 2010 people tried to block the Olympic torch from reaching the stadium, but the Games still went ahead.



**Kaliningrad, Russia**  
2018 Football World Cup

It was the first World Cup in which FIFA joined the host country in monitoring working conditions. But the results were a let-down: human rights organizations documented 17 deaths, workers were exposed to sub-zero temperatures, and those that protested were deported to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. In 2014, the authorities destroyed one of the last wetlands in the region when they poured more than one million tonnes of sand onto an island in the Pregolya River to stabilize it for the construction of the stadium.



**Sochi, Russia**  
2014 Winter Olympics

This is how modern slavery looks: 12-hour shifts from Monday to Sunday, overcrowded accommodation, confiscated passports, and USD 8.3 million in unpaid wages.



**Beijing, China**  
2008 Summer Olympics  
2022 Winter Olympics

The plan was simple, China wins the bid to host the games and global economic relations improve. But, this came at the expense of the Chinese population. During the preparation for the Olympic Games Beijing has displaced an estimated 1.25 million people. The games cost USD 40 billion to host and brought in USD 5 or 6 billion, half of which went to the IOC. It remains unknown how much revenue China has made by an increase in tourism since the games.



**Tokyo, Japan**

2020 Summer Olympics  
Despite large civilian protests and objections from several athletes, the Tokyo Olympics were held during the Covid-19 pandemic (though a year late, in 2021).



**Pyeongchang, South Korea**  
2018 Winter Olympics

A false start for environmental protection: the Korean government allowed more than 58,000 trees in a nature reserve on Mount Garwang to be cut down to make space for the ski slopes. To date, only 184 of the felled trees are said to have been replanted.



**Doha, Qatar**

2022 Football World Cup  
Thousands of construction site deaths, bribery of FIFA officials, homophobia enshrined in law. This upcoming World Cup is anticipated to be the most controversial since the 1978 World Cup in Argentina, which was then under military dictatorship.



**Delhi, India**

2010 Commonwealth Games  
Police violently evicted over 200,000 people from their homes and killed at least 18 in a move to "beautify" the city by trying to make it free of informal settlements. The construction of the "Commonwealth Village", built near the Yamuna River, sealed off important floodplains and has significantly added to the risk of flooding across the entire district.



**Cape Town, South Africa**

2010 Football World Cup  
Locals had seeds of hope: new infrastructure projects, public transport, and more jobs. The reality was, however, a lot different: financial losses estimated at USD 6.6 billion. The stadium is now home to two Cape Town football clubs and welcomes on average 6,000 spectators—even though it can seat 55,000.



**London, England**  
UEFA Euro 2020  
Barclays Premier League

Two new stadiums are driving up real estate prices. On average, the closer a property is to either of the arenas, the more its value increases. House or apartment prices are on the rise, even several kilometres away from the grounds, accelerating gentrification even more.



**Athens, Greece**  
2004 Summer Olympics

What remains? Ruins, debt, and broken promises. In the year following the games, Greece's national debt rose from €182 to 201 billion. And today, less than half of the Olympic sites are still in use. Politicians promised to build "Europe's largest park", with open-air swimming pools and bicycle paths, but zero progress has been made. The 2004 Olympics remain a losing game for Greece.



**Manaus, Brazil**  
2014 Football World Cup

A stadium in the jungle: millions of people across Brazil demonstrated against elite corruption during the construction of the World Cup stadium. One evening, over 90,000 protesters gathered in the Amazonas city of Manaus. Today, the stadium is hardly used, but it costs an enormous USD 2.79 million a year to maintain.



**Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**  
2014 Football World Cup  
2016 Summer Olympics

Authorities evict over 22,000 families from the favelas under the pretence that their homes were at a "high risk of natural disasters". Up until then, no one had been interested in the safety of residents during previous flooding. The government took the opportunity to establish military bases in the favelas, which remained present even after the games.



# Blowing the whistle for human rights

From the World Cup to the Olympics: fans all over the world go crazy for major sporting events. But not everyone involved has reason to celebrate. Vital issues like human rights and climate action are often shown a red card by politicians and the sports industry. Here's an overview of the darker side of such international events, shedding light on criticisms from fans and those affected.

Sport is a euphoric spectacle with its fan-filled stadiums and extravagant opening ceremonies. Even though organizers like FIFA and the International Olympic Committee claim to support values such as peace, tolerance, and dignity, when it comes to organizing the events, these values take a back seat to profit.

The list of problems in international sporting events is long: corruption, exploitation on construction sites, climate destruction and environmental damage, as well as human rights abuses are, if anything, the rule rather than the exception. It is time for a change: fair play and equality instead of profit and greed.





