



Visa crisis threatens media coverage for the 2026 World Cup

Description

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World Cup

As [FIFA](#) continues to promote the 2026 World Cup as the most expansive and inclusive tournament in history, a new crisis has emerged that could overshadow the long-awaited event. The International Sports Press Association has warned of significant difficulties facing dozens of accredited journalists in securing visas to enter the United States.

In an [official letter to FIFA media officials](#) the association revealed it has received an increasing number of complaints from accredited journalists—including a large group of Iranian journalists and those from various African nations—who have yet to secure the necessary visas, despite fulfilling all of the tournament's media accreditation requirements.

FIFA accreditation is not enough

This issue highlights a recurring dilemma for media coverage of major sporting events in the United States: obtaining official FIFA accreditation does not automatically grant entry into the country. It remains subject to U.S. visa procedures and consular decisions.

The International Sports Press Association argues that this reality threatens the principle of equal opportunity for media outlets, particularly for news organizations from countries that already face travel restrictions or additional bureaucratic hurdles.

World Cup concerns over global coverage

The association warned that these ongoing obstacles could result in the absence of media voices from entire countries and regions at the world's biggest football event. This would directly impact the

diversity of media coverage and limit the ability of fans in certain nations to follow the tournament through their own local journalists and correspondents.

Furthermore, the association noted that the issue extends beyond administrative travel logistics, touching on a broader concern regarding free media access to global sporting events and ensuring that various nations are represented within the tournament's media centers.

A call for urgent intervention

The AIPS has called on FIFA to intervene and engage with the relevant U.S. authorities to find practical solutions that ensure accredited journalists can obtain the necessary visas before the competition begins. The association emphasised that the success of the World Cup is measured not only by the number of participating teams or the size of the crowds, but also by the ability of media from all over the world to cover the event without hindrance.

These warnings come roughly a year before the start of the tournament to be hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico, serving as an early indicator of potential organisational challenges for the largest edition of the World Cup to date, which will feature 48 teams for the first time.

Featured image via David Ramos/Getty Images

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