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Texas Law Human Rights Clinic proposes new UN mechanism to address human rights violations in sports

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AUSTIN, TX (4 December 2023) - The Human Rights Clinic at the University of Texas at Austin School of Law is presenting a proposal in Geneva, Switzerland, recommending the creation of a new United Nations (UN) Special Procedure for Sports and Human Rights.

Today, the Human Rights Clinic released a white paper report detailing the multifaceted relationship between human rights and sports, *A New Referee: The Need for a New Special Procedure on Human Rights and Sports*. The white paper highlights the positive and negative aspects of the relationship between sports and human rights and outlines the complexity of the current landscape of human rights protection in sports.

Clinic Director, Professor Ariel Dulitzky acknowledged the “the role of sports in promoting human rights, as sports promote the human rights values of fair play, equality and inclusion, and peace and social understanding”. “Sadly, there are human rights abuses happening in the sports field” added Professor Dulitzky. . The *A New Referee* white paper mentions, among others, discrimination against women, transgender and athletes with disability, sexual harassment and violence, labor violations of stadium workers displacement of communities, particularly during the construction of trans-national mega-sporting events.

David Young, a student attorney with the Clinic, said that “one complexity in addressing these abuses is that some sport stakeholders, such as the Olympic Committee or FIFA are non-state actors, which are traditionally governed autonomously and strive to be politically neutral”. According to Young, “Non-state actors are key stakeholders in sports, which makes it imperative that the UN do more to focus on sports in human rights, given the current state-based human rights system.”

Hannah Wei, another student attorney with the Clinic explained that “if the Clinic’s proposal is adopted, a new Special Procedure will be established to serve as an independent fact finding and monitoring mechanism to clarify the relationship between sports and human rights.” “The New Special Rapporteur will serve to address the shortcomings and gaps of the UN’s current patchwork approach and will help the UN to adequately address the lack of feasible remedies for violations of human rights in sports.”

Please read the full white paper [here](#). Full URL:
https://law.utexas.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2023/12/2023_11_29_HRC_A-New-Referee-The-Need-for-a-New-Special-Procedure-on-Human-Rights-and-Sport.pdf

Learn more about the Clinic at: <https://law.utexas.edu/clinics/human-rights/> or follow [@UTLawHRclinic](#) on Twitter.

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