SPORTSWASHING: THE ETHICAL DILEMMA OF SAUDI ARABIA'S OWNERSHIP

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Press Release:
In our latest report, following up on the 2021 Saudi Sportswashing report, we highlight a concerning escalation in the scale of investment and secretive operations in the sports industry within the region. Despite well-documented human rights abuses, sports figures and brands are now accepting lucrative deals with Saudi Arabia, compromising their moral stance.

One notable example is Cristiano Ronaldo's $75 million per year contract with Al Nassr FC, one of the top 4 Saudi teams owned by the Public Investment Fund (PIF), which raises significant concerns as all investment decisions are controlled by MBS as the Chairman.

The softening of political stances, including President Joe Biden's visit to Saudi Arabia on July 15th, 2022, and Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's contemplation of inviting MBS to 10 Downing Street for economic benefits, adds to the disconcerting trend.

The report sheds light on Saudi Arabia's efforts to portray an illusory image of progressiveness through extensive sports investments, contradicting the grim reality of ongoing human rights abuses within the country. Saudi Arabia's oppressive monarchical system persists in disregarding principles of equality, justice, and human rights for its people.

Since Muhammad bin Salman (MBS) assumed power in 2015, the problem has worsened. Dissenting voices have been swiftly silenced, leading to imprisonment, torture, and the heinous murder of Jamal Khashoggi. Over 300 prisoners of conscience remain in Saudi prisons, and recent harsh sentences have been imposed on those who dare to raise their voices against the regime.

Sportswashing has emerged as a pervasive issue, with Saudi Arabia investing significantly in boxing, golf, football, esports, tennis, UFC, horse racing, chess, motorsports, and wrestling to divert attention from human rights abuses. While reported figures offer insight into the magnitude of these deals, undisclosed amounts remain hidden, potentially underestimating the true extent of investment.

Critics argue that these investments serve as distractions from ongoing human rights abuses in Saudi Arabia. Grant Liberty, a UK-based human rights organization, calls upon the international community to take a firm stance against sportswashing.

It is crucial for human rights organizations, athletes, and fans to unite in condemning sportswashing and holding Saudi Arabia accountable for its actions.

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About Grant Liberty:

Grant Liberty is a UK-based human rights organization dedicated to promoting freedom, justice, and human rights worldwide. Our mission is to create a world where everyone can live with dignity and freedom, and we advocate for individual rights, support prisoners of conscience, and raise awareness about human rights abuses.

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