Critics call foul as Qatar's 2022 World Cup city built with 'slavery'

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Qatar is building it with what human rights activists are calling “modern slavery” – and are hoping that when the dust settles, 450,000 will come.

Lusail Iconic Stadium, part of a $45 billion city springing up on the outskirts of Doha, is scheduled to host the opening and final games of the 2022 World Cup, but for 40,000 workers building it, it is no labor of love. The migrant workforce faces deadly conditions, miserable accommodations and low wages, say advocates.

“Conditions in camps are simply inhuman,” said Tim Noonan, the director of communications for the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), an organization aimed at protecting workers’ rights. “They are fed food that you wouldn’t feed to an animal in many cases.”

When completed, the government-planned city of Lusail will be home to a population the size of Atlanta’s. Some 200 towers and 27 hotels under construction along with the 86,000-seat stadium will become permanent fixtures on the skyline. Tunnels for an extensive metro system have already been completed.

"As it stands we are yet to launch the final design of the iconic Lusail Stadium," a spokesman for Qatar's Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy told FoxNews.com. "Every stadium is on schedule though and at varying stages of construction."

A website set up by Lusail's developer, the Lusail Real Estate Development Company, boasts that the city "goes beyond the usual concept of a modern city; it is, in fact, a futuristic reflection of wonderful aspirations, technologies and ideas.”

But according to Noonan, people entering the country to work on Lusail and Qatar’s other World Cup stadium projects – which developers say will cost between $8 and 10 billion -- are being misled and exploited.

The migrants are able to work in Qatar as part of a sponsorship with a company, but once they want to leave, he says, labor laws give their employers the final say.

“They are often tricked by unscrupulous migrant agents and are told a story about what sort of job, what salary they will have,” Noonan told FoxNews.com. “And when they arrive they find out that it’s not the case at all. They find out that they are going to get paid less than all the promises they made.”

Noonan said an estimated 1.4 million migrant workers are toiling away in various jobs inside the oil-rich Emirate in “appalling, squalid labor camps,” some crammed 10 to 12 in a single room with non-working ACs in sweltering temperatures.

At the start of June, 13 migrants working on part of a countrywide $200 billion infrastructure investment ahead of the World Cup were killed in a fire in Salwa, the ITUC reported.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino, who visited Qatar in April, however, vowed that conditions for workers are “on the right track.”

“The hosting of the FIFA World Cup is an opportunity to set a benchmark in terms of sustainable and fair working conditions for all workers in Qatar,” Infantino said after meeting with government officials.

Soccer’s governing body has been under fire ever since it awarded the tournament to Qatar in 2010.

Eliane Houlette, France’s financial prosecutor, said in late May that authorities are looking into launching an investigation into how Qatar secured the bid amid allegations that top officials in France, including former President Nicolas Sarkozy, exerted pressure on FIFA to choose the Gulf nation as the 2022 host.

“We are thinking about it, we have several elements that encourage us to investigate," Houlette told French radio Europe 1, according to Reuters.

Executives at Europe’s top soccer leagues also have opposed the decision. FIFA executives decided to move the tournament from the summer to the winter because of Qatar’s heat, but it now creates a scheduling conflict as Europe’s leagues run from August to May.

As for silencing the human rights outcry, Noonan believes Qatar and FIFA have the power and authority to make things better, but are lacking the motivation to do so.

“FIFA is content for the World Cup to be built on modern slavery,” he said.