

UEFA maintains World Cup boycott despite FIFA retreat

European soccer body dismisses FIFA emergency meeting support for Infantino

● **UEFA demands assurances from FIFA**

● **FIFA directors back Infantino in Morocco**

AFP | Paris

European football's governing body UEFA said they would maintain their boycott of the men's and women's World Cups yesterday despite FIFA withdrawing the plan to open up their competitions to private investment.

UEFA's initial threat issued last Thursday to boycott FIFA competitions is widely credited in being pivotal in the plan being shelved.

Although that was one of their conditions to be met for them to withdraw their threat, they said yesterday the second one had not been met.

"UEFA's associations were very clear about the conditions attached to their non participation in FIFA competitions," read their statement

"First, the proposals to sell off the major competitions had to be withdrawn and secondly, assurances have to be made that such attempts to disfigure the game in this way will never be made again.

"These conditions have not



The UEFA logo is pictured during a UEFA Europa League match

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UEFA member associations remain aligned behind the boycott of FIFA competitions, including the men's and women's World Cups

been met."

Whilst UEFA had welcomed the withdrawal of the plan last Saturday they had slammed FIFA president Gianni Infantino and his "shabby, backroom, opaque deal."

Their tone had not changed in yesterday's statement.

"UEFA made it abundantly

clear in its statement on Saturday that it has lost confidence in Gianni Infantino's presidency. That position holds," they said.

Infantino had gained some respite on Wednesday when he held an emergency meeting of senior FIFA directors in Morocco.

They had backed him, issuing a statement saying he had their "full support" but apologising "over errors made after the proposal was leaked to media".

UEFA dismissed this show of support, which included FIFA secretary-general Mattias Grafstrom, whose leaked email to staff on Tuesday had criticised the plan.

"Yesterday's announcement that some people employed by the FIFA President (and whose

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UEFA dismissed FIFA's internal show of support for Infantino, arguing that staff members whose careers depend on him could not restore confidence

careers depend on his favour) agree with him changes nothing," said UEFA.

FIFA floated the plan last Tuesday, saying it could raise up to \$4.2 billion based on a valuation of \$20 billion for a new commercial subsidiary, called the FIFA Forward Enterprise (FFE), which it proposed would run events such as the World Cup and Club World Cup.

It said that, if approved, the project could provide each of FIFA's 211 member associations with a one-off payment of \$20 million in early 2027, and increase their funding allocation for the 2027-2030 cycle from \$8 million to \$20 million.

However, after a global backlash Infantino was forced into the humiliating climbdown days later.

Salah completes move to Turkey's Trabzonspor



Egyptian forward Mohamed Salah arrives at Istanbul Ataturk Airport

AFP | Istanbul

Former Liverpool star Mohamed Salah yesterday signed a two-year contract with Turkish club Trabzonspor after leaving the Premier League giants at the end of his contract.

The 34-year-old Egyptian international reached "a two-year agreement" with the club on the Black Sea coast who will compete in the Europa League play-off round at the end of August.

The second-highest-paid player in the Premier League last season, Salah will earn 17 million euros (\$19.6 million) per season in addition to bonuses, a record for the Turkish league, his new club said.

Salah will also receive a 20 percent share of revenue from sales of jerseys and merchandise bearing his name.

The Egypt captain was welcomed as a hero by thousands of fans in the northeastern city of Trabzon and is set to take part in a signing ceremony with supporters at Trabzonspor's stadium later yesterday.

"I am really happy... and looking forward to training with the team. Everywhere I go I always win or try to win something. Hopefully we can do something in the league and in Europe as well," Salah, who will wear the number 10 shirt, said on Wednesday.

Salah has previously played in Egypt, Switzerland, Italy, and England.

Salah netted 257 goals for Liverpool in 442 appearances in all competitions during his nine-year spell, making him the third top goalscorer in the club's history, winning two Premier League titles and a Champions League trophy.

BRAVE CF'S Balkan dominance fuels record-breaking viewership surge in India

TDT | Manama

The roar inside Burgas Arena in Bulgaria was impossible to ignore, but the loudest statement from BRAVE CF 107 came from thousands of kilometers away.

As one of Eastern Europe's biggest combat sports spectacles unfolded last Saturday, August 1, millions of viewers across India tuned in to witness another memorable night of elite mixed martial arts.

That overwhelming response transformed the showcase into a watershed moment, producing unprecedented digital numbers that highlighted India's emergence as one of the sport's most rapidly expanding markets.

The card amassed a remarkable 3,684,125 combined live views across YouTube and BRAVE TV, setting a new benchmark for a live MMA broadcast involving the Indian market.

Interest remained exceptionally strong long after the final bell, as highlights, behind-the-scenes footage, fighter interviews, and fan interactions generated an astonishing 200.2 million social media views.



For BRAVE CF President Mohammed Shahid, the achievement reflects India's transformation into one of the sport's most exciting frontiers.

"These record-breaking numbers are a testament to why India is becoming a true hotbed of mixed martial arts," Shahid said.

"The passion, knowledge, and enthusiasm of Indian fans continue to elevate the sport to new heights. Their unwavering

support has become an essential part of BRAVE CF's global journey, and we are proud to grow alongside this incredible MMA community."

Far more than impressive statistics, the accomplishment marks a defining chapter for MMA in India while validating BRAVE Combat Federation's long-term investment through live shows, athlete development, strategic partnerships, and local-

ized content.

It also reinforces the country's growing appetite for world-class competition and its importance to the promotion's continued international growth.

One of the biggest driving forces behind the surge in engagement was Indian sensation Owais Yaqoob, who delivered another statement victory on the supporting card of BRAVE CF 107.

Competing before a packed

Burgas Arena, the 28-year-old stretched his winning streak to six by overwhelming hometown favorite Delyan Georgiev in their 68-kilogram catchweight contest.

From the opening bell, Yaqoob dictated the pace with relentless forward pressure and crisp combinations that never allowed Georgiev to establish any rhythm.

The referee stepped in at the 4:00 mark of the opening round, awarding the Indian standout a dominant technical knockout triumph.

The emphatic finish further elevated his status as one of BRAVE CF's brightest emerging talents and placed him firmly in the conversation for a showdown against reigning BRAVE CF Lightweight World Champion Abdisalam "Omok" Uulu Kubanychbek.

Beyond the action inside the cage, the promotion demonstrated the strength of its digital-first strategy.

Connecting with fans through YouTube, BRAVE TV, and multiple social platforms reflects the changing habits of younger au-

diences while making elite MMA accessible to millions around the world.

Such remarkable reach also strengthens BRAVE CF's appeal to broadcasters, sponsors, and commercial partners, reinforcing its standing as the world's fastest-growing MMA organization with a presence spanning multiple countries across several continents.

Those remarkable numbers also provide a powerful springboard for future appearances in India and the organization's continued expansion throughout South Asia.

Shahid concluded by thanking the supporters whose passion helped turn the occasion into a historic success.

"To every fan across India, thank you for believing in BRAVE CF and for making this historic achievement possible," Shahid said.

"Your incredible support motivates everyone in our organization every day. We sincerely hope to return to India soon and bring another unforgettable night of world-class mixed martial arts to this amazing country."

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