

Richard Masters  
Chief Executive Officer  
Premier League

Subject: UK sanctions regime and Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al-Nahyan

Dear Mr Masters,

I am writing to you to inform you that FairSquare has submitted a request that the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office examine the role of the UAE Deputy Prime Minister, Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, in providing support to the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Sudan, and consider the imposition of sanctions under the Sudan (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020.

FairSquare Projects is a non-profit human rights organisation that works, among other things, on accountability in sport. We have written to the Premier League and to the UK government on multiple occasions, outlining the very serious problems associated with state ownership of football clubs. In March 2023 we wrote to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and outlined four areas of concern about state ownership of football clubs: states' ability to use and threaten force; states' unique capacity to own multiple clubs and the associated risks to competitive integrity; the financially destabilising impact of state ownership; and the use of clubs as branding vehicles for abusive states.

FairSquare's request to the FCDO takes place in the context of what the UK government has described as overwhelming evidence of RSF atrocities in Sudan, which has included multiple massacres and instances of widespread sexual violence, and the UK government's sanctioning of multiple individuals and entities linked to either the RSF or the Sudanese Armed Forces, who have been in armed conflict since June 2023.

Included in our submission is evidence from international humanitarian organisations with a presence on the ground in Sudan. Their analysis is that the conflict could escalate further and that the UAE could be a key actor in any escalation and widening of the conflict, especially in the light of new evidence linking the UAE to RSF supply lines originating in Ethiopia. This document provides clear evidence that the UAE is the key external driver of the conflict, and of Sheikh Mansour's links to the Rapid Support Forces.

- There is overwhelming evidence from multiple credible sources, including the UN Panel of Experts on the Sudan, that the UAE has been providing weapons, ammunition, and other supplies to the RSF since June 2023 in violation of a 2004 UN embargo. In doing so the UAE has fueled the conflict, which has resulted in well-documented RSF atrocities in El-Fasher in October 2025.

- The UAE has allowed individuals and entities linked to the RSF to coordinate their activities from the UAE, apparently unimpeded.
- Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al-Nahyan controls or has controlling influence over two of the UAE entities that funded a field hospital at an airport in Chad through which the UAE funnelled arms and supplies to the RSF.
- Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al-Nahyan has been the most senior and visible UAE interlocutor with the RSF before the outbreak of conflict in Sudan and since.
- US intelligence has intercepted calls between Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and the RSF's commander General Hemedti, and US officials have personally confronted Sheikh Mansour about UAE support for the RSF.
- Sheikh Mansour controls International Media Investments, which part owns Sky News Arabia, which has been credibly accused of whitewashing RSF atrocities in Sudan.

Manchester City is the most high-profile and successful club in the City Football Group. City Football Group states that it is “majority owned by Newton Investment and Development LLC, [fully owned by His Highness Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan.](#)” In March 2023, the Premier League [updated](#) its [owners and directors test](#) to include a provision that would disqualify any individual subject to UK sanctions.<sup>1</sup>

Irrespective of whether or not the UK government chooses to investigate Sheikh Mansour, we believe the evidence in our submission to the FCDO should be of profound concern to the Premier League. The owners and directors test exists to root out individuals whose actions threaten the reputation or financial stability of its member clubs. Having a club owned by an individual with links to an ongoing genocide serves as a stain on the Premier League's reputation and should serve as a further reminder of the ongoing problems associated with state ownership of football clubs.

We would be happy to discuss any aspect of this issue with you.

Yours sincerely,



Nicholas McGeehan  
Director  
FairSquare

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<sup>1</sup> Rule F1.28 of the 2025/2026 Premier League Handbook states that “A Person shall be disqualified from acting as a Director and no Club shall be permitted to have any Person acting as a Director of that Club if in respect of an individual, they become a UK Sanctions Restricted Person.”