

journal

Human rights and the future of Formula One

- 1 Last week *the Guardian* reported that Bernie Ecclestone has indicated that Formula One (F1) will have new ownership by the end of the year and that three parties are currently interested (theguardian.com, 6 October).
- 2 While these talks take place behind closed doors, we have a public message for any potential owners: you have an opportunity to put F1 on track to respect human rights and position the sport globally as a foremost example of how big sporting events and human rights should interact.
- 3 Far from being associated with the values the global public associate with sport – friendship, mutual respect, fair play and excellence – F1's reputation has been marred by links with repressive states and their human rights abuses, primarily through its choice of countries as Grand Prix hosts.
- 4 F1 published a human rights statement in April this year, which was 38 (Formula One reverses human rights stance in runup to Bahrain Grand Prix, theguardian.com, 17 April). But, given that shortly afterwards it announced a Grand Prix in a country where the already worrying human rights situation had deteriorated rapidly, it remains unclear how seriously the company is taking these commitments.
- 5 Any future owners of F1 have a tremendous opportunity to push the company to build on its human rights commitments and ensure they are followed up by genuine action. This will create a sport the fans deserve and act as an example of how major sporting events can ensure respect for human rights.



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adapted from *The Guardian*, 2015