

**U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security Hearing**  
***“Before the Whistle: Assessing Information Sharing and Security Collaboration Ahead of Major Events”***

**February 24, 2026**

**Written Testimony for Ray Martinez, Chief Operating Officer  
Miami FIFA World Cup 2026 Miami Host Committee**

**INTRODUCTION**

Chairman Garbarino, Ranking Member Thompson, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today regarding public safety and security preparations associated with the FIFA World Cup 2026™ and, specifically, Miami’s role as one of the official host cities. I appreciate the Committee’s leadership and continued oversight in ensuring that major international events hosted in the United States are conducted safely, securely, and in a manner that reflects the highest standards of intergovernmental coordination and operational readiness.

**OVERVIEW OF THE FIFA WORLD CUP 2026™ IN MIAMI AND OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT**

The FIFA World Cup 2026™ represents the largest sporting event ever conducted globally. Miami has been designated as one of sixteen host cities for the FIFA World Cup 2026™, and will host seven official matches at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, which will be rebranded as Miami Stadium for the duration of the tournament. These matches will include group stage matches, a Round of 32 match, a quarterfinal match, and the bronze, or third-place, game. The tournament will run from June 11 through July 19, 2026, and will also include a twenty-three-day FIFA Fan Festival in downtown Miami’s Bayfront Park, which will serve as a major public gathering and celebration site.

This global event is expected to attract hundreds of thousands of international visitors, and the Miami metropolitan area faces both an extraordinary opportunity and a historic operational challenge. Public safety planning encompasses law enforcement, fire rescue, emergency management, healthcare infrastructure, transportation, cybersecurity, and community engagement components to ensure coordinated and resilient operations across all venues and activation zones. We thank the Committee for providing \$625 million in security funding in P.L. 119–21. These funds will be vital to support the complex safety operations associated with an event of this scale.

To support state level preparation, the South Florida Regional Multi-Agency Coordination Group (MAC) was formally established to ensure unified planning, coordinated response capabilities, and strategic policy alignment across jurisdictions. At the federal level, the White House Task Force on the FIFA World Cup has been established to coordinate nationwide interagency support, accelerate security and infrastructure readiness, and align host city preparations with federal capabilities, intelligence resources, and operational support frameworks. We are grateful for the White House Task Force and Executive Director Giuliani's efforts to support and partner with the FIFA World Cup.

The MAC structure is designed to coordinate executive-level policy decisions, resource prioritization, and strategic guidance for complex incidents or major planned events. It serves as the bridge between executive leadership and operational Incident Command, ensuring unity of effort across multiple jurisdictions and disciplines. Public safety planning for the World Cup in Miami is centered on a unified command structure led by the Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office. The Sheriff's Office is responsible for stadium security, perimeter control, and crowd safety operations, working in close coordination with Miami-Dade Fire Rescue, which provides emergency medical support, fire safety services, specialized rescue capabilities, and on-site incident response. The City of Miami Police Department and Fire Rescue Department provide operational support for downtown venues, including festival operations and transportation hubs. State law enforcement and transportation agencies support traffic management, surge staffing, and specialized operational needs.

Federal partners, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Secret Service, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, and the Department of Homeland Security, play critical roles in threat assessment, intelligence integration, cybersecurity protection, and contingency planning. The White House Task Force on the FIFA World Cup has played an essential role in ensuring that federal partnerships are maximally leveraged to create a safe environment for fans to enjoy the event.

The United States Department of Homeland Security classifies special events using Special Event Assessment Ratings (SEAR) Levels 1 through 5 with SEAR 1 events being the most significant. These designations reflect factors such as the presence of high-profile attendees, international media interest, geopolitical considerations, and the level of federal coordination required. The seven matches scheduled in Miami carry significant SEAR designations, with the first six matches classified as SEAR 2 events and the Bronze Medal match classified as a SEAR 1 event. The concurrent FIFA Fan Festival is rated as a SEAR 2 event. These ratings necessitate elevated interagency coordination at the federal, state, and local levels.

The Miami-Dade Department of Emergency Management has hosted several full-scale and tabletop exercises available for all public safety agencies during the past year. In January 2026, a multi-agency Region 4 World Cup tabletop exercise was conducted to test emergency response protocols, evacuation procedures, intelligence sharing, cyber disruption scenarios, and incident command coordination under the National Incident Management System framework. These exercises strengthen interagency coordination, validate operational communications, and enhance preparedness for complex and evolving threat scenarios.

## **INFORMATION SHARING FRAMEWORK AND OPERATIONAL INTEGRATION**

The South Florida Fusion Center, in coordination with its regional intelligence partners—including the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force—continues to conduct proactive intelligence collection, comprehensive threat assessments, and robust information sharing across local, state, federal, tribal, and international agencies.

This effort includes close collaboration with FIFA’s Safety and Security Intelligence Group to ensure unified situational awareness and operational alignment. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Office of Intelligence and Analysis provides weekly intelligence briefings to support planning and decision-making. The Intelligence Operations Center serves as the regional clearinghouse for intelligence matters, maintaining direct liaison with federal agencies and host city fusion centers nationwide. Sensitive information is disseminated to all participating partners through the Department of Homeland Security’s Homeland Security Information Network.

## **VENUE SECURITY, PUBLIC SAFETY OPERATIONS, AND EMERGING THREAT PREPAREDNESS**

Security planning at Miami Stadium incorporates lessons learned from prior high-attendance events and international best practices. These measures include multi-layered security perimeters, early ticket verification and credential screening, expanded screening capacity including bag checks and X-ray systems, hardened fencing and engineered pedestrian flow corridors, and rapid deployment crowd control units.

Operational readiness is supported through real-time situational awareness platforms and joint operations centers, enabling continuous coordination and rapid decision-making among participating agencies. These capabilities support proactive threat identification and coordinated operational responses.

Bayfront Park will serve as the official FIFA Fan Festival site, accommodating up to 30,000 daily visitors over twenty-three days. Public safety measures at this location include secured perimeters with controlled entry and exit points, magnetometer screening, dedicated emergency access lanes, and coordinated ingress and egress management. On-site public safety

infrastructure includes emergency medical services, fire suppression capabilities, rapid medical transport access, and coordinated law enforcement and private security staffing. High-visibility patrols and a robust volunteer program will support situational awareness, public safety, and visitor assistance.

One of the most significant emerging threat vectors associated with this event involves Unmanned Aerial Systems, commonly referred to as drones. Recent threat assessments indicate a significant rise in malicious or unauthorized drone activity at large-scale events worldwide. These systems present risks including aerial surveillance of security operations, delivery of hazardous payloads, unauthorized incursions that could disrupt operations or create panic, airspace conflicts with law enforcement and emergency aircraft, coordinated swarm activities, and signal interference affecting communications systems.

Mitigation measures include the implementation of Temporary Flight Restrictions coordinated with federal aviation authorities, deployment of counter-UAS detection technologies such as radio frequency sensors and radar systems, joint counter-drone coordination with federal technical teams, public awareness and enforcement campaigns, rapid interdiction protocols, and specialized response team training. Counter-UAS planning is fully integrated into operational planning and emergency response exercises. We appreciate this committees' support for \$500 million in C-UAS grant funding through the Department of Homeland Security and the Trump administration's efforts to prioritize the first half of that funding for FIFA World Cup 2026™ host cities.

In addition, the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office leads proactive human trafficking prevention initiatives, including enforcement operations, victim services coordination, public awareness campaigns, and reporting mechanisms. Regional transportation agencies are implementing adaptive signal timing, expanded transit operations, managed ride-share staging, pedestrian safety corridors, and coordinated traffic management strategies to ensure safe and efficient movement of visitors and residents.

## **FEDERAL COORDINATION, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, AND OPERATIONAL SUPPORT**

The White House Task Force on the FIFA World Cup serves as the central federal coordination body supporting World Cup Host Committees. The Task Force assists host cities synchronizing federal agency support across security, transportation, border operations, and infrastructure protection, facilitating intelligence sharing and threat assessments, coordinating federal grant pathways and resource allocations, and aligning national counterterrorism and cybersecurity capabilities with local operational planning. This coordination enhances host city access to federal intelligence streams, specialized technical capabilities, and rapid federal surge support if

threat conditions evolve. We are grateful for the good relationship between Host Committees and the Task Force. In particular, Executive Director Giuliani and his team have been extremely helpful and attentive to addressing Host Committee issues as they arise. This relationship has been fundamental in ensuring that federal resources are leveraged to enhance our security operations.

Community engagement and public communication are essential components of World Cup preparation. Pre-event outreach includes presentations to community organizations, businesses, and local stakeholders. During the event, a large-scale volunteer deployment will support multilingual visitor assistance, safety messaging, crowd flow management, and emergency reporting awareness. Public communications will emphasize entry procedures, prohibited items, drone restrictions, emergency contacts, and transportation guidance.

## **CONCLUSION**

Miami's World Cup preparedness reflects a layered, intelligence-driven, and federally integrated public safety framework. Unified command leadership by the Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office, supported by municipal police departments, fire rescue agencies, federal partners, counter-UAS capabilities, and coordinated federal support through the White House Task Force on the FIFA World Cup, positions Miami to deliver a secure, resilient, and globally credible tournament environment.

These efforts ensure the safety of participants, visitors, and residents while establishing a model for interagency coordination and public safety operations for future major international events hosted in the United States.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to answering your questions.