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World Cup 2010: Fifa issue Nigeria ultimatum over Goodluck Jonathan ban threat

Fifa have demanded that the Nigerian government withdraw their ban on the Super Eagles playing international football for the next two years and have given them until Monday to comply.

By Telegraph staff and agencies

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Nigeria's president Goodluck Jonathan has imposed the ban as punishment for the team's poor **World Cup** campaign.

That flies in the face of Fifa's rules on government interference in the running of national associations and the world governing body says unless Nigeria back down the federation will be suspended.



Disappointment: Nigeria had a World Cup to forget in South Africa Photo: EPA

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Fifa communications director Nicolas Maingot told a media briefing: "Fifa have sent a letter to the Nigeria Football Federation indicating that the government of Nigeria has until Monday at 6pm to cancel its direction to withdraw Nigeria's participation from all Fifa and CAF competitions for the next two years.

"Failure to do so will lead to the suspension of the NFF.

"Also the management committee set up by the Nigeria government will not be recognised by Fifa.

"Fifa executive committee member Dr Amos Adamu (from Nigeria) will be in Nigeria on Monday for a last mediation attempt."

Suspension covers national team and club matches in African competitions, referees as well as the cash that flows from Fifa to national associations.

Maingot added: "A suspension goes beyond the suspension of the national teams. It also freezes financial help and no referees can participate in international competition."

Fifa secretary general Jerome Valcke said the Nigeria issue threatened the whole set-up of international football.

Valcke told South African radio station 702: "If the government of Nigeria do not back down, we will suspend Nigeria and the decision will be taken in the next 48 hours.

"We have been severe with France, why would we not be toward Nigeria? We have 208 members and if one of them goes against our constitution and the system, then the whole footballing pyramid is in danger."

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