

IHF: Do member federations actually play handball?





Results from the latest IHF congress in November:

- The scandalized president since 2000, Hassan Moustafa (73 years and from Egypt), was elected for another four years after running unopposed
- Three new federations were admitted as full members of IHF by the congress, bringing the total to 207: Jamaica, Fiji and Timor-Leste

Coincidence? Probably not!



Since Hassan Moustafa became president in 2000 the IHF has accepted 63 new member federations (30 percent of the total) – amongst them Nauru, Cambodia, Belize, Papua New Guinea, Swaziland and Tuvalu.

They all have the same power (one member, one vote) and they consolidate the position of Moustafa...

BUT DO THEY ACTUALLY PLAY HANDBALL?

Paper federations in IHF

Research done by Politiken in late 2015, before the World Championship in Denmark:

- 120 federations did not have the level to be a part of the world ranking which only included 84 nations - for instance Kiribati, Nepal and Uganda was no where to be seen
- 113 federations were hard to follow as they did not have a facebook-profile or functioning homepage – quite a few more reported on ihf.info that they had a homepage but they were dysfunctional, consisted of dummy text or showed content far from handball (one was even Asian porn)
- For 102 federations it was not possible to confirm that they had a national handball tournament – for instance in Sierra Leone, Marshall Islands and Guam
- 76 federations had either not reported a contact address or just reported a post box so it seemed like they did not have a head quarter – this was the case in for instance Saint Lucia, Mongolia and Micronesia



What did the small federations say?

- Villiamu Sekifu, Tuvalu (member since 2013): *"IHF approached us to become a member and donated some balls. But we can't start until we have a coach. It is a new sport here so we need a person who knows it and can introduce us to it before we can continue"*
- Robert Doko, Papua New Guinea (member since 2013): *"Handball wasn't a sport here, before IHF contacted us. You can question, whether you should have introduced us to the sport, before we were admitted. You can say that they put the cart before the horse"*
- Sihle Siphesihle W. Mavuso, Swaziland (member since 2013): *"We owe a big thanks to mr. Moustafa for the support – if IHF had not suggested it, there probably would not have been handball in Swaziland (...) My first task as the president of the new federation was to find people to play handball"*

Back to the IHF congress in 2017



Reactions from Per Bertelsen, head of the Danish Handball Federation, in an interview with Politiken:

Why did Moustafa run unopposed? Are people afraid to challenge him? Are they just sure they will lose? "I don't really know – but the latter is probably the most likely"

Fiji, Jamaica og Timor-Leste were admitted as members of IHF. But do they even play handball in Fiji – have you heard of it? "No, I have not. But I spoke to one from Jamaica and he told me that they have around 50 players, mostly students, who play once in a while"

The admission of Fiji and Timor-Leste just looks like a hunt for members so IHF can grow. Have you ever heard of handball in Timor-Leste? "No, and honestly I must admit that I can't say right now where Timor-Leste is located. Never heard of the country, actually"