

# **EURO 2012: UKRAINIAN VIOLENCE & RACISM ENSURES UK'S FANS DON'T TRAVEL**



It is expected about 5000 football fans from UK will travel for EURO 2012 this year, while in 2010 to visit Fifa World Cup South Africa travelled about 10 000 UK football fans. "Stay at home, watch it on TV. Don't even risk it... because you could end up coming back in a coffin." These are the exact words that the former England captain Sol Campbell advises fans at the BBC documentary program, Panorama. This was in regards to the selection of Poland and Ukraine as the host countries for Euro 2012. Campbell openly advises the fans to stay at home and not even risk going to the event due to rising issues in violence and racism.

The documentary show had taken over a month's time to film matches held in both of the host countries. Footage revealed people in the stands mocking the black players on the field with monkey chants and Nazi inspired salutes. Footage of violent assault on Asian students was also provided. The documentary show caught a crowd in Poland chanting anti-Semitic songs. They also showed a reel of black players being insulted directly by the crowd with monkey chants and calls. There were also two eye-catching events recorded in Ukraine. In the Metalist Stadium (Kharkiv, Ukraine) approximately two thousand (2,000) fans gave off the Nazi salute in support of their team. Some of them later explained to BBC that they were shouting "Sieg Heil". This was a direct reference to Adolf Hitler's hatred towards blacks and Jews. Colonel Volodymyr Kovrygin, chief of the local police denied this however and claimed that the people were merely pointing at the opposing team. Just two weeks after the event another broke out when Metalist assaulted a small group of supporters. They were Indians studying in Ukraine.

@VIDEO@

Following these events, Sol Campbell had mentioned that UEFA should not have given the event to the two countries. He mentions, "I think that they were wrong, because what they should say is that 'if you want this tournament, you sort your problems out. Until we see a massive improvement... you do not deserve these prestigious tournaments in your country."

UEFA had stated that their zero tolerance against racism was valid on and off the playing field. They had mentioned that the game's referee could stop a game and abandon the event should a racist incident occur. UEFA also mentioned that this was the opportunity for the two nations to resolve their issues and to improve their public image. They stated that they were working hand in hand with both countries.

This was to ensure the safety of all their fans whether they were white, Asian, black and others. UEFA did state that the BBC Panorama documentary was a one-sided view of the issue. The matches shown on the documentary show were taken from domestic games and were an issue to be handled by the local football authorities. The British government had also issued a safety warning to all attending fans who were of Asian or Afro-Caribbean descent to be extra careful when attending the games.

Despite the reassurances, however, families of renowned English football players, Alex Oxlade-

Chamberlain and Theo Walcott, are rumored to stay at home. They will not be attending the Euro 2012 due to fear of racist attacks that could occur.

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