Athletics Integrity Unit

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Decision of the Athletics Integrity Unit in the Case of Ms Ruti Aga

Introduction

1. World Athletics has established the Athletics Integrity Unit ("**AIU**") whose role is to protect the integrity of the sport of Athletics, including fulfilling World Athletics' obligations as a Signatory to the World Anti-Doping Code ("the "**Code**"). World Athletics has delegated implementation of the World Athletics Anti-Doping Rules ("**ADR**") to the AIU, including but not limited to the following activities in relation to International-Level Athletes: Testing, Investigations, Results Management, Hearings, Sanctions and Appeals.

2. Ms Ruti Aga ("the **Athlete**") is a 32-year-old distance runner from Ethiopia and an International-Level Athlete.[1]

3. This decision is issued by the AIU pursuant to Rule 8.5.6 ADR, which provides as follows:

> "8.5.6 In the event that the Athlete or other Person either (i) admits the violation and accepts the proposed Consequences or (ii) is deemed to have admitted the violation and accepted the Consequences as per Rule 8.5.2(f), the Integrity Unit will promptly:
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> (a) issue a decision confirming the commission of the violation(s) and the imposition of the specified Consequences (including, if applicable, a justification for why the maximum potential sanction was not imposed);
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> (b) Publicly Report that decision in accordance with Rule 14;
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> (c) send a copy of the decision to the Athlete or other Person and to any other party that has a right, further to Rule 13, to appeal the decision (and any such party may, within 15 days of receipt, request a copy of the full case file pertaining to the decision)."

The Athlete's Commission of Anti-Doping Rule Violations

4. Rule 2 ADR sets out that the following shall constitute an Anti-Doping Rule Violation:

> *"2.1 Presence of a Prohibited Substance or its Metabolites or Markers in an Athlete's Sample*

[1] https://worldathletics.org/athletes/ethiopia/ruti-aga-14534530

[…]

2.2 Use or Attempted Use by an Athlete of a Prohibited Substance or a Prohibited Method

[…]

2.5 Tampering or Attempted Tampering with any part of Doping Control by an Athlete or other Person"

5. On 15 March 2026, the Athlete provided a urine Sample In-Competition at the '*Meishan Renshou Half Marathon*' held in Meishan, China, which was given code 8283955 (the "**Sample**").

6. On 31 March 2026, the World Anti-Doping Agency ("**WADA**") accredited laboratory in Beijing, China (the "**Laboratory**") reported that the analysis of the Sample had revealed the presence of Methylprednisolone ("the **Adverse Analytical Finding**").

7. The AIU reviewed the Adverse Analytical Finding in accordance with Article 5 of the International Standard for Results Management ("**ISRM**") and determined that:

   7.1. the Athlete did not have a Therapeutic Use Exemption that had been granted (or that would be granted) for the Methylprednisolone found in the Sample; and

   7.2. there was no apparent departure from the International Standard for Testing and Investigations or from the International Standard for Laboratories that could reasonably have caused the Adverse Analytical Finding.

8. On 20 April 2026, in accordance with Article 5 of the ISRM, the AIU therefore issued the Athlete with a Notice of Allegation of Anti-Doping Rule Violations which (i) notified the Athlete of the Adverse Analytical Finding and invited her to provide an explanation by no later than 27 April 2026, and (ii) requested that the Athlete attend an interview with AIU representatives.

9. The Athlete attended an interview with AIU representatives on 21 April 2026 and, in summary, stated inter alia that:

   9.1. She had been suffering from a knee injury since April 2025 and she was initially referred by the Ethiopian Athletics Federation to a doctor, Doctor 1, who prescribed an X-ray examination and treatment, but her pain did not improve.

   9.2. She also received treatment in China while attending competitions there in 2025 and 2026.

   9.3. In early March 2026, she consulted a different doctor, Doctor 2, at the Urael Medium Clinic in Addis Ababa (the "**Urael Medium Clinic**"). The consultation was for a separate medical issue, but she had taken the opportunity to speak to Doctor 2 about her ongoing knee pain. As a result of that consultation, Doctor 2 had prescribed the Athlete medication (Melthylprednisolone) to treat her knee.

9.4. Following the Athlete's visit to the clinic in March 2026, Doctor 2 attended the Athlete's home to administer her an injection of Methylprednisolone, approximately one week before she competed in the Meishan Half Marathon.

9.5. The Athlete said that she would collate all relevant medical documentation, including all available records from Doctor 1 and Doctor 2, and provide them to the AIU.

10. On 4 May 2026, the Athlete provided the AIU with a medical document purported to have been issued by the Urael Medium Clinic on 11 February 2026 (the "**Medical Document**"), which confirmed a prescription for her as an out-patient at the Urael Medium Clinic on that date for "*Depo-Medrol (methylprednisolone acetate) 80 mg IM stat #01 vial*".

11. Upon review of the Medical Document, the AIU noted that it did not specify any diagnosis or reason for the prescription, nor did it indicate when the medication had been administered[2]. The AIU's attempts to verify the existence of the Urael Medium Clinic were also unsuccessful.

12. Therefore, on 7 May 2026, the AIU requested assistance from the Ethiopian Anti-Doping Authority ("**ETH-ADA**") to determine the authenticity of the Medical Document and to check whether the Athlete had attended the Urael Medium Clinic when she claimed to have done so.

13. On 11 May 2026, ETH-ADA forwarded a letter from the St. Urael Clinic of the same date, confirming the clinic's official name to be St. Urael Internal Medicine Specialty Clinic, not the Urael Medium Clinic as indicated on the Medical Document provided by the Athlete. The letter also stated that the Athlete had never received medical treatment at their facility (the St. Urael Clinic). Finally, the letter attached the St. Urael Clinic's template prescription paper which differed in form to the Medical Document.

14. The ETH-ADA further noted that the Medical Document appeared to be of questionable origin as the phone number listed was not working, and both the clinic's official stamp and logo were absent from the prescription. Additionally, ETH-ADA confirmed that no facility operating under the name of 'Urael Medium Clinic' could be identified.

15. On 13 May 2026, the AIU therefore asked the ETH-ADA to contact Doctor 2 with a view to establishing inter alia (i) at which clinic they worked, (ii) whether they had treated the Athlete and, if so, when, (iii) whether they had issued the Medical Document, and (iv) why they had prescribed the medication.

16. In response to ETH-ADA's request for interview, Doctor 2 told ETH-ADA that they were a family member of the Athlete who had been asked by the Athlete's husband to help her out. Doctor 2 admitted to having treated the Athlete at her home after seeing her scan results and to having prescribed her medication using an old prescription pad from the clinic where they used to work.

[2] The Athlete said during interview that she had consulted Doctor 2 at the Urael Medium Clinic in 'early March 2026' whereas the prescription document confirming she was prescribed Melthylprednisolone is dated 11 February 2026.

17. The AIU asked ETH-ADA to verify whether Doctor 2 had ever worked at the St Urael Clinic and, on 22 May 2026, ETH-ADA provided the AIU with a letter from the St. Urael Clinic dated 21 May 2026. The letter confirmed that Doctor 2 had never been employed by the clinic, either on a full-time or a part-time basis, and that the Medical Document provided by the Athlete had not originated from them.

18. The ETH-ADA subsequently established from the Addis Ababa City Administration Food and Drug Authority (the **"Authority"**) i.e., the city region in which the St. Urael Clinic is located, that no doctor by the name of Doctor 2 has ever been registered or licensed with the Authority as a certified medical practitioner.

19. The AIU concluded therefore that:

    19.1. The Athlete had not attended a consultation with Doctor 2 at the St Urael Clinic on 11 February 2026 and she had not been issued with a prescription for Methylprednisolone on that date;

    19.2. Doctor 2 has never been employed (either on a full or a part-time basis) by the St Urael Clinic;

    19.3. Doctor 2 is not, and has never been, a registered doctor with the Authority;

    19.4. The Medical Document that the Athlete provided to the AIU as evidencing her prescription for Methylprednisolone on 11 February 2026 was not issued by the St Urael Clinic and did not originate from that institution; and

    19.5. The Urael Medium Clinic does not exist.

20. The AIU concluded in the circumstances that the Medical Document submitted by the Athlete as part of her explanation for the Adverse Analytical Finding was a forged/manipulated document and that the Athlete had therefore committed an Anti-Doping Rule Violation under Rule 2.5 ADR (Tampering or Attempted Tampering with any part of Doping Control by an Athlete). The AIU also remained satisfied that the Athlete had committed Anti-Doping Rule Violations under Rule 2.1 ADR and Rule 2.2 ADR based on the Adverse Analytical Finding.

21. Therefore, on 10 September 2026, the AIU issued the Athlete with a Notice of Charge in accordance with Rule 8.5.1 ADR and Article 7.1 ISRM confirming that she was being charged with Anti-Doping Rule Violations under Rule 2.1 ADR, Rule 2.2 ADR and Rule 2.5 ADR ("the **Charge**"), and that those Anti-Doping Rule Violations warranted a total period of Ineligibility of six (6) years pursuant to Rules 10.2.1(b) ADR and 10.9.3(c) ADR (i.e., two (2) years for the Presence/Use of a Specified Substance and four (4) years for Tampering or Attempted Tampering, to be served consecutively). In addition, the Athlete was also informed that she was subject to a Provisional Suspension effective immediately pending the determination of the matter.

22. The Athlete was informed inter alia of her right to request a hearing and given the opportunity to admit the Anti-Doping Rule Violations to potentially benefit from a one-year reduction in the period of Ineligibility pursuant to Rule 10.8.1 ADR. The AIU invited the Athlete to respond to

the Charge confirming how she wished to proceed by no later than 17 September 2026, but the Athlete failed to respond by the stipulated deadline.

23. On 22 September 2026, the AIU reminded the Athlete of a final deadline of 30 September 2026 to sign and return the Admission of Anti-Doping Rule Violations and Acceptance of Consequences Form in order to benefit from a one-year reduction in the period of Ineligibility pursuant to Rule 10.8.1 ADR; however, the Athlete once again failed to respond.

24. Therefore, on 6 October 2026, the AIU wrote to the Athlete noting that she had failed to respond to the Charge within the given deadline and that she was therefore deemed to have waived her right to a hearing, to have admitted the Anti-Doping Rule Violations and accepted the Consequences set out in the Notice of Charge. The AIU confirmed that it would issue a final decision in her case accordingly.

Consequences

25. Collectively, the Anti-Doping Rule Violations pursuant to Rule 2.1 ADR, Rule 2.2 ADR and Rule 2.5 ADR constitute the Athlete's first Anti-Doping Rule Violation pursuant to Rule 10.9.3 ADR.

26. Rule 10.2 ADR specifies that the period of Ineligibility for an Anti-Doping Rule Violation under Rule 2.1 ADR or Rule 2.2 ADR shall be as follows:

> *"10.2.1 Save where Rule 10.2.4 applies, the period of Ineligibility will be four years where:*
>
> *(a) The anti-doping rule violation does not involve a Specified Substance or a Specified Method, unless the Athlete or other Person can establish that the anti-doping rule violation was not intentional.*
>
> *(b) The anti-doping rule violation involves a Specified Substance or a Specified Method and the Integrity Unit can establish that the anti-doping rule violation was intentional.*
>
> *10.2.2 If Rule 10.2.1 does not apply, then (subject to Rule 10.2.4(a)) the period of Ineligibility will be two years."*

27. Methylprednisolone is a Prohibited Substance on the WADA 2026 Prohibited List under the category S9 - Glucocorticoids. It is a Specified Substance prohibited In-Competition when administered by any injectable, oral or rectal route.

28. The period of Ineligibility to be imposed is therefore a period of Ineligibility of two (2) years, unless the AIU can demonstrate that the Rule 2.1 ADR and 2.2 ADR Anti-Doping Rule Violations were intentional.

29. The AIU has no evidence that the Anti-Doping Rule Violations under Rule 2.1 and 2.2 ADR were intentional and the mandatory period of Ineligibility to be imposed is therefore a period of two (2) years.

30. In addition, Rule 10.3.1 ADR specifies the period of Ineligibility to be imposed for a breach of Rule 2.5 ADR (Tampering or Attempted Tampering with Doping Control) as follows:

> *"10.3.1 For violations of Rule 2.3 or Rule 2.5, the period of Ineligibility will be four (4) years except: (i) in the case of failing to submit to Sample collection, if the Athlete can establish that the commission of the anti-doping rule violation was not intentional, the period of Ineligibility will be two (2) years; (ii) in all other cases, if the Athlete or other Person can establish exceptional circumstances that justify a reduction of the period of Ineligibility, the period of Ineligibility will be in a range from two (2) years to four (4) years depending on the Athlete's or other Person's degree of Fault; or (iii) in a case involving a Protected Person or Recreational Athlete, the period of Ineligibility will be in a range between a maximum of two (2) years and, at a minimum, a reprimand and no period of Ineligibility, depending on the Protected Person or Recreational Athlete's degree of Fault."*

31. The Athlete has not established any exceptional circumstances that exist to justify any reduction in the period of Ineligibility of four (4) years to be imposed for the Anti-Doping Rule Violation committed pursuant to Rule 2.5 ADR.

32. Rule 10.9.3(c) states as follows:

> *"10.9.3 Additional rules for certain potential multiple violations*
>
> *[...]*
>
> *(c) If the Integrity Unit establishes that an Athlete or other Person committed a violation of Rule 2.5 in connection with the Doping Control process for an underlying asserted anti-doping rule violation, the violation of Rule 2.5 will be treated as a stand-alone first violation and the period of Ineligibility for such violation must be served consecutively (rather than concurrently) with the period of Ineligibility, if any, imposed for the underlying anti-doping rule violation. Where this Rule 10.9.3(c) is applied, the violations taken together will constitute a single violation for purposes of Rule 10.9.1.*

33. The Athlete committed the violation of Rule 2.5 ADR in connection with the Doping Control Process (specifically during Results Management of the Adverse Analytical Finding) and therefore falls squarely within this provision. The violation of Rule 2.5 ADR shall therefore be treated as a stand-alone first violation and the four (4)-year period of Ineligibility must be served consecutively to the two (2)-year period of Ineligibility imposed for the violations of Rule 2.1 ADR and Rule 2.2 ADR (i.e., a total period of Ineligibility of six (6) years).

34. A Notice of Charge was issued to the Athlete on 10 September 2026 and the Athlete failed to request a hearing within the given deadline. The Athlete is therefore deemed to have waived her right to a hearing, to have admitted the Anti-Doping Rule Violations and to have accepted the Consequences set out in the Notice of Charge.

35. On the basis that the Athlete is deemed to have admitted the Anti-Doping Rule Violations under Rule 2.1 ADR, Rule 2.2 ADR and Rule 2.5 ADR, in accordance with Rule 10.2.2 ADR and Rule 10.9.3(c) ADR, the AIU confirms by this decision the following Consequences for a first Anti-Doping Rule Violation:

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35.1. a period of Ineligibility of six (6) years commencing on 10 September 2026 (the date of Provisional Suspension); and

35.2. disqualification of the Athlete's results on and since 15 March 2026, with all resulting Consequences, including the forfeiture of any medals, titles, awards, points, prizes, prize money and appearance money.

Publication

36. In accordance with Rule 8.5.6(b) ADR, the AIU shall publicly report this decision on the AIU's website.

Rights of Appeal

37. This decision constitutes the final decision of the AIU pursuant to Rule 8.5.6 ADR.

38. Further to Rule 13.2.3 ADR, WADA and ETH-ADA have a right of appeal against this decision to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne, Switzerland, in accordance with the procedure set out at Rule 13.6.1 ADR.

39. If an appeal is filed against this decision by WADA or ETH-ADA, the Athlete will be entitled to exercise her right of cross-appeal in accordance with Rule 13.2.4 ADR.

Monaco, 20 October 2026