

ATHLETICS INTEGRITY UNIT REFERS RUSAF CHARGES TO THE WORLD ATHLETICS COUNCIL AND RECOMMENDS CONSIDERING EXPULSION OF THE FEDERATION

29 January 2020, Monaco: The Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) Board has today referred the charges issued by the AIU against the Russian Athletics Federation (RusAF) on 21 November 2019 to the World Athletics Council. In doing so, the AIU Board has made recommendations to the World Athletics Council to maintain the suspension of the Authorised Neutral Athlete (ANA) process until the charges are finally determined and, if the charges are upheld, to consider imposing the severest possible consequences, including considering the expulsion of RusAF from the membership of World Athletics.

These recommendations were made by the AIU Board after reviewing RusAF's response to the Notice of Charge issued on 21 November 2019 which alleged a number of breaches by RusAF of the World Athletics Anti-Doping Rules relating to the involvement of RusAF officials and representatives in the submission of forged documents and false explanations to the AIU in connection with the Whereabouts Failures case of Russian athlete, Danil Lysenko.

RusAF filed a Preliminary Response to the AIU's Notice of Charge on 2 January 2020 and a Supplementary Response on 16 January 2020. RusAF had a total of eight weeks in which to respond to the charges, having been granted three extensions of time by the AIU in that period.

The AIU Board considers in the circumstances that RusAF has had ample opportunity to put forward any material or evidence that it contends answers the AIU's case against it. So far, in the judgment of the AIU Board, it has not done so. The AIU Board has therefore concluded that the case to answer against RusAF for multiple breaches of its obligations under the Anti-Doping Rules remains unimpaired.

The AIU Board finds it regrettable that, in the face of clear and compelling evidence, RusAF has chosen not to admit to the acts and omissions of the employees, directors and representatives of RusAF for which it is liable under the Anti-Doping Rules. In the AIU Board's view, a responsible member federation in the circumstances would have admitted the charges and shown contrition for its conduct, but RusAF has chosen to do neither. Instead, RusAF has gone to great lengths to deny any involvement in the matter, blame others and attack the process. This approach is deeply concerning for the AIU Board as it seems to indicate that the current leadership of the Federation is merely a continuation of the former.

In the circumstances, the AIU Board has no hesitation in referring the matter under the Anti-Doping Rules to the World Athletics Council, so that the matter may be dealt with in accordance with the terms of the World Athletics Constitution, including if need be submission of the dispute to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

In referring this matter to the Council, the AIU Board also considers it fit to make the following recommendations:

First, the AIU Board recommends, given the seriousness of the charges against RusAF, the strength of the prima facie case, and ongoing concerns about the suitability of the current RusAF management to oversee the sport of athletics in Russia with integrity, that the Authorised Neutral Athlete process should remain suspended until the charges are finally determined.

Second, if RusAF's alleged breaches of the Anti-Doping Rules are upheld, the AIU Board recommends in light of (i) the seriousness of the violations in question (ii) RusAF's total lack of contrition for its conduct and (iii) the fact that the previous sanctions of World Athletics have apparently failed to deter RusAF from reoffending, the World Athletics Council should consider imposing on RusAF the severest possible consequences under the World Athletics Constitution, including (without limitation) the payment of indemnity costs and a significant fine; and that it should further consider recommending to the World Athletics Congress that RusAF be expelled from membership.

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About the Athletics Integrity Unit

The Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) is the independent body created by World Athletics that manages all integrity issues – both doping and non-doping – for the sport of athletics. The remit of the AIU includes anti-doping, the pursuit of individuals engaged in age or competition results manipulation, investigating fraudulent behaviour with regards to transfers of allegiance, and detecting other misconduct including bribery and breaches of betting rules. It is the AIU's role to drive cheats out of our sport, and to do everything within its power to support honest athletes around the world who dedicate their lives to reaching their sporting goals through dedication and hard work.


Athletics Integrity Unit

media@athleticsintegrity.org

www.athleticsintegrity.org

 @aiu_athletics

 @aiu.athletics

 @aiu_athletics