

AIU CHARGES ALBANIAN ATHLETICS OFFICIALS AND ATHLETE

9 DECEMBER 2022, MONACO: Following a year-long investigation, the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) has charged senior officials of the Albanian Athletics Federation for alleged breaches of the World Athletics' Integrity Code of Conduct relating to the submission to World Athletics of a competition result for Albanian long jumper, Izmir Smajlaj, which contributed to him securing a universality place to participate in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

The persons who have been charged are the Federation's President, Gjegj Ruli; its General Secretary, Nikolin Dionisi; and the athlete (Izmir Smajlaj), for breaches of the following Integrity Standards in the Integrity Code of Conduct: Honesty (Rule 3.3.1), Maintain Integrity of Competition (Rule 3.3.4), Failure to Report (Rule 3.3.15) and Rule 4.4 (Complicity). Each of the above-named persons has been provisionally suspended pending the outcome of their cases before the Disciplinary Tribunal.

Their charges stem from a series of alleged actions following the Dita E Kërcimeve Competition held on 8 May 2021 in Tirana, Albania, in which Smajlaj competed and placed first with a distance of 8.16 metres. It is alleged that false information was submitted to World Athletics and the AIU in support of this competition result.

On 23 September this year, World Athletics announced the establishment of a new Competition Manipulation Watch List following the AIU's investigation of 17 reports of suspicious competition results during the qualification period for last year's Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. Albania is among seven Member Federations currently on that Watch List.

"The AIU's mandate is to ensure clean and fair competition, and to hold anyone who may have breached the Integrity Code of Conduct accountable for their actions, including high-ranking officials," said AIU Head Brett Clothier.

"Competition manipulation is a serious threat to the integrity of athletics and the AIU is committed to protecting our sport from it."

The AIU will make no further comment on this matter until the cases have been resolved in accordance with the applicable rules.

About the Athletics Integrity Unit

The Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) is the independent body created by the 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.



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