



FIDE ETHICS & DISCIPLINARY COMMISSION

The First Instance Chamber of the Ethics & Disciplinary Commission (hereafter called “the EDC Chamber”), sitting in the following composition -

Chairperson: Mr. David Hater

Members: Ms. Olga Baskakova

Mr. Ravindra Dongre

during an exchange of correspondence and an in person meeting, made the following

DECISION

Case no. 4/2025: " Alleged boycotting of match (Women's Section) against Israel by the Chess Federation of Islamic Republic of Iran during the 45th FIDE Chess Olympiad in Budapest, 2024".

INTRODUCTION

1. The EDC Chamber notes its establishment as the First Instance Panel by the EDC Chairwoman on 3rd April 2025.
2. The Complainant is the Israel Chess Federation ("the Complainant") against the Chess Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran ("the Respondent"), concerning allegations of a deliberate boycott in the final round of the 2024 FIDE Chess Olympiad, in violation of the FIDE Charter and the FIDE Ethics & Disciplinary Code.
3. The EDC Chamber notes the procedural history and timeline of this case, which contributed to the length of these proceedings:
 - o The original Complaint contained a material factual inaccuracy regarding the existence of a specific General Assembly decision. On 18th May 2025, the case was sent back to the Complainant for correction.



- A revised Complaint was received on 21st May 2025.
 - The Complaint was formally sent to the Respondent on 9th June 2025.
 - The Respondent's Response was received on 11th August 2025. The Respondent noted that its submission was delayed due to the ongoing conflict in the Gaza region, a delay which the Chamber took into consideration.
 - Following the Respondent's defense, which cited a force majeure event (flooding and road closures) as the reason for its team's absence, the Chamber undertook an independent enquiry regarding the facts presented by the Respondent. This involved contacting the Chief Arbiter of the Olympiad (14th August), receiving input from the Pairing Officer (14th August), and correspondence with the Project Officer - FIDE Deputy Board President, via email between September and November, after which a conclusive response was received.
4. The EDC Chamber notes the contents of the following documents received as part of the case file: the Complaint from the Israel Chess Federation (with its subsequent revision) along with its exhibits, the Response from the Chess Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and critical evidence gathered during the Chamber's enquiries from key tournament officials.

ADMISSIBILITY

5. For the Complaint to be admissible, it must meet the minimum substantive requirements set out in Article 5 of the EDC Code.
6. The Complainant is the Israel Chess Federation, a member federation of FIDE, and therefore has the necessary standing to submit a complaint. (Art. 5.1.a)
7. The Respondent is the Chess Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, a member federation of FIDE and thus a member of the FIDE Family. (Art. 5.1.b)
8. The allegations made and the documents submitted as part of the complaint indicate, at least *prima facie*, that the Respondent's actions amount to a violation of the FIDE Charter, specifically Article 4.4, and Article 6.6 of the EDC Code, which prohibit discrimination against a country on account of national origin, and constitute a breach of fundamental ethical principles. (Art. 5.1.c)



9. The alleged misconduct must have been committed in the international sphere, on the basis of which the EDC will exercise jurisdiction (Art. 5.1.d). The conduct in question occurred during the FIDE Chess Olympiad, an international team competition organized by FIDE with multi-national participation from 169 national teams. In accordance with Article 4.7(a) of the EDC Code, this tournament unequivocally falls within "the international sphere," and the alleged boycott by a national federation directly "affects the interests of other national federations or the international chess community as a collective."
10. The alleged misconduct occurred on 22nd September 2024, which is within the three-year period immediately preceding the date the complaint was received by FIDE. (Art. 5.1.e)
11. Upon due consideration, the EDC Chamber unanimously finds that the complaint meets all the requirements stipulated in Article 5.1 of the FIDE Ethics and Disciplinary Code and is therefore admissible.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

12. The EDC Chamber notes the subject-matter of the Complaint:
 - The Complainant submitted that during the final round of the 2024 Chess Olympiad in Budapest, the Iranian women's national team failed to appear for its scheduled match against the Israeli women's national team, resulting in a 4-0 forfeit victory for Israel.
 - The Complainant alleged that this absence was not accidental but constituted a deliberate boycott of Israeli athletes, consistent with a long-standing pattern of such behavior by the Respondent and other federations, and in violation of the FIDE Charter's principles of non-discrimination.
 - The Complainant provided a history of alleged boycotts by Iranian athletes across various sports, including chess, to support its claim of a systemic practice.
13. The EDC Chamber notes the defense put forward by the Respondent:
 - The Respondent claimed that its team's absence was due to a force majeure event, namely an unexpected rise of the Danube River causing flooding, road blockages, and severe access restrictions to the venue.



- The Respondent provided a taxi receipt from the day of the match as evidence of its players' attempts to reach the venue.
- The Respondent characterized the Complaint as a politically motivated exploitation of an emergency situation, falling outside the jurisdiction of the EDC.

FINDINGS

Upon due consideration, the EDC Chamber, by unanimity of its members, finds that:

14. It is an undisputed fact that the Iranian women's team did not appear for its final-round match against Israel at the 2024 Chess Olympiad and forfeited the match 4-0.
15. The Chamber's enquiries decisively refutes the Respondent's force majeure defense. Testimony from the FIDE Deputy Board President, confirms that while flooding was a concern earlier in the event, "the situation with floods was contained" by the final day of the tournament, and "no team was deterred from participation in the games." She further stated that while team captains were informed of a contingency plan, "There was no such need" to implement it on the day in question.
16. Further evidence from the tournament's Pairing Officer confirms that the Iranian Men's (Open) team was staying in the same hotel as the Women's team and faced identical logistical circumstances. The Men's team arrived on time and played its match against Armenia. The selective impact of the alleged flooding, affecting only the team paired against Israel, defies logical explanation and undermines the Respondent's defense.
17. The Chamber also notes that the Chief Arbiter received information before the match suggesting a potential boycott, and that no official communication was received from the Respondent on the day of the match citing flooding as a reason for their absence.
18. In the absence of a credible alternative explanation, and considering the documented history of boycotts of Israeli athletes by Iranian sports representatives as detailed in the Complaint and supported by public records, the Chamber finds



itself comfortably satisfied that the forfeit was a deliberate act of boycott against the Israeli national team.

19. A deliberate refusal to compete against a specific nation based on its nationality constitutes a clear violation of:
 - a) Article 4.4 of the FIDE Charter, which rejects "any kind of discrimination against a country, private person or group of people on account of race, skin colour, ethnic, national or social origin, citizenship, birth, age, status, wealth, disability, language, religion, sex, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, sexual orientation, political opinions, or any other reason."
 - b) Article 6.6 of the FIDE EDC Code, which states that " There shall be no discrimination in chess on the basis of race, gender, ethnic origin, colour, culture, religion, political opinion, marital status, sexual orientation or any unfair or other irrelevant factor, except as permitted by law, including in the election or appointment of persons in the FIDE Management Board, FIDE Council, FIDE Continents, Zonal Councils, Commissions, Committees, or other elected or appointed bodies of the FIDE.
20. This act is a breach of the foundational ethical principles of FIDE and the Olympic Movement.

DECISION

21. Accordingly, and considering all of the above, the EDC Chamber unanimously decides as follows:
22. The Chess Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran is found guilty of breach of:
 - a) Article 4.4 of the FIDE Charter.
 - b) Article 6.6 of the FIDE EDC Code.

SANCTION

23. In determining the appropriate sanction, the EDC Chamber notes that, for a national federation, the sanctions available—other than temporary exclusion from membership—are limited to a warning, a reprimand, or a fine (Art. 13.1 of the



EDC Code). Given the gravity of the offence, which concerns a violation of FIDE's most fundamental principles, the Chamber finds that either a warning or a reprimand would be manifestly inadequate.

24. The Chamber has also taken into account the established jurisprudence relating to the imposition of fines. In EDC Case No. 2/2023, a fine of €10,000 was imposed on an individual Grandmaster for improperly withdrawing from a tournament. The nature and seriousness of the present violation—committed by a national federation and amounting to an act of discrimination—are substantially more severe. Accordingly, a fine of a higher magnitude is justified to reflect the seriousness of the misconduct and to ensure adequate deterrence.
25. The EDC Chamber is empowered to impose a fine of up to €50,000 (Art. 13.1(c) of the Code). The Chamber notes that the highest fine previously imposed by the EDC was €45,000 on the Chess Federation of Russia in Case No. 11/2023 for conduct of a particularly grave nature. While the misconduct of the Respondent in this case is serious, it is of a lesser magnitude than that which warranted the maximum fine in the cited precedent.
26. Having regard to the nature of the violation, the necessity of safeguarding the integrity of FIDE's core principles, the need to deter similar future misconduct, and the relevant jurisprudence, the Chamber hereby imposes the following sanction:
 - (a) A fine of €25,000 payable to the FIDE Treasurer within 21 (twenty-one) days from the date of this decision; failing which, a temporary exclusion of membership in FIDE to participate in FIDE General Assembly, for a period of 1 (one) year commencing on the 22nd day from the date of this decision.
 - (b) Proof of payment of the fine (if paid) must be submitted to the FIDE Office and the EDC Chairwoman then in office by no later than 21 (twenty-one) days from the date of this decision.
27. The parties are referred to Chapter 7 of the EDC Procedural Rules and advised that this decision may be appealed to the EDC Appeal Chamber by giving written notice of such appeal to the EDC Chairman (ethics@fide.com) within 21 days from the date upon which this decision is received. The notice of appeal must clearly state all the grounds for the appeal. An appeal lodgment fee of 500 EUROS must at the same time be paid to the FIDE Financial Department. Failing the due exercise of this right of appeal, the EDC Chamber's decision will become final.



28. The EDC Chamber requests the FIDE Secretariat to communicate forthwith the decision to the Complainant and the Respondent and to publish in due course the decision on the FIDE website.

David A. Hater
CHAMBER CHAIRPERSON
FIDE ETHICS & DISCIPLINARY COMMISSION