



# **DECISION OF THE ADJUDICATORY BODY OF THE AQUATICS INTEGRITY UNIT**

**Pursuant to Article 32.3 of the World Aquatics Integrity Code**

Decision by:

**Mr Raymond Hack (South Africa), Single-Member Panel of the  
Adjudicatory Body**

In the matter of:

**Mr Farid Abi Raad (Lebanon), Respondent**

Regarding:

**Articles 2 a) and 2 b) of the World Aquatics (FINA) Code of Conduct,  
Article C.4 of the World Aquatics (FINA) Code of Ethics and Articles 5.1,  
5.2, 5.3 and 9.9 of the World Aquatics Integrity Code**

Lausanne, 11 December 2025

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## **I. Parties**

1. Mr Farid Abi Raad (the “Respondent”) was the Secretary General of the Lebanese Swimming Federation (the “LSF”) at the time of the alleged violations.
2. The allegations are brought forth by the Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer (the “CECO”) of the Aquatics Integrity Unit (“AQIU”), the operationally independent unit of World Aquatics responsible for upholding the integrity of aquatic sports, with its jurisdiction, established pursuant to Article 24 of the World Aquatics Constitution.

## **II. Factual Background**

### **A. Introduction**

3. This proceeding revolves around the CECO’s allegations that the Respondent submitted false financial information and documents to World Aquatics to benefit from the Olympic Aquatics Support Programme (“OASP”), a program intended to provide financial support to World Aquatics’ National Member Federations to further develop aquatic sports, from grassroots to elite levels, within their respective territories.
4. The CECO also alleges that during the Respondent’s time as Secretary General of the LSF, he abused his position and used threats to arbitrarily and unfairly influence decisions, including those related to swimmer selection for competitions.
5. Below is a summary of the relevant facts and allegations based on the Parties’ written submissions.

### **B. Summary of Relevant Facts**

#### **i. Allegations related to the 2020 World Aquatics Olympic Aquatics Support Program**

6. On 30 November 2019, the Respondent completed and submitted to World Aquatics an application form in respect of the 2020 OASP, on behalf of the LSF, to request a financial contribution of USD 25,000 (the “Funds”) from World Aquatics to cover the costs of training courses (the “Project”) for athletes to be delivered in 2020 by Mr Jean Louis Morin (“Mr Morin”), an expert in swimming techniques and training programs.
7. When completing his application form, the Respondent certified the accuracy and truthfulness of the information provided by him.
8. On 28 January 2020, World Aquatics approved the Project and authorised the disbursement of the Funds, exclusively for deployment by the LSF in respect of the Project. The Funds were to be sent to LSF in two instalments: an initial payment of 70% (i.e. USD 17,500, (the “First Instalment”), which was sent on 31 January 2020) and the remaining 30% (i.e. USD 7,500) (the “Second Instalment”) to be sent upon the Project’s completion.
9. On 5 February 2020, the Respondent signed a memorandum to World Aquatics for 2020 OASP through which he committed to use the Funds exclusively for the Project.
10. To receive the Second Instalment, the Respondent had to submit a final report (the “Final Report”), documenting all expenses incurred. He did so on 22 December 2020, attesting that the Project had been delivered by Mr Morin during 2020.

11. By signing the Final Report, the Respondent committed to follow the rules and regulations of the OASP and certified that the information provided in such Final Report was a true and accurate summary of the expenditures related to the Project.
12. On 11 January 2021, World Aquatics informed the Respondent that the documents he submitted with the Final Report were not sufficient to justify the expenses incurred as valid proof of payment was required for each specific expense. The Respondent was granted a final deadline to submit all missing documents necessary to justify the expenses incurred for the training courses conducted by Mr Morin.
13. On 18 January 2021, the Respondent replied by email that all payments were made in cash due to travel agencies and hotels requiring this method of payment. Additionally, the Respondent asserted that the LSF's bank refused to transfer funds to Mr Morin and therefore, moneys owed to Mr Morin needed to be paid by the LSF to Mr Morin in cash.
14. On 4 February 2021, the Respondent requested by email an update on the payment of the Second Instalment.
15. On 24 March 2021, World Aquatics informed the Respondent by email that after reviewing the Final Report and the purported justifications provided by the Respondent, it was unable to trace any payments made by the LSF, and thus could not accept the Final Report as true and accurate.
16. On 12 April 2021, World Aquatics requested by email that the LSF return the First Instalment.
17. On 15 April 2021, the Respondent provided documentation to World Aquatics purporting to prove that the Project had been delivered, including statements signed by Mr Morin in which he purportedly confirmed that he travelled to Lebanon in 2020 to deliver the Project.
18. After receiving this documentation, World Aquatics paid the Second Instalment of 2020 OASP to LSF.
19. However, in the AQIU investigation initiated in December 2024, Mr Morin confirmed that he did not travel to Lebanon in 2020 and attached a copy of his passport as evidence. Indeed, no entry or exit stamps from Lebanon in 2020 appeared in Mr Morin's passport.
20. Upon being asked for explanations as to why he provided a statement suggesting that he had indeed delivered the courses in 2020, Mr Morin stated that the Respondent had asked him to draft reports dated 2020 to facilitate compensation and reimbursement requests.
21. Therefore, according to the CECO, the Respondent violated Articles 2 a) and 2 b) of the World Aquatics (FINA) Code of Conduct and Article C.4 of the World Aquatics (FINA) Code of Ethics in force at the relevant time, by providing false information and documents to World Aquatics in 2020 to improperly obtain the Funds through the OASP.

## **ii. Allegations related to the 2021 World Aquatics Olympic Aquatics Support Program**

22. On 29 November 2020, the Respondent completed an application form for the 2021 OASP on behalf of the LSF, requesting once again the Funds from World Aquatics to cover the Project for athletes to be delivered in 2021 by Mr Morin.
23. When completing the 2021 OASP application form, the Respondent

certified the accuracy and truthfulness of the information provided.

24. On 28 May 2021, World Aquatics approved the Project and authorised the disbursement of the Funds for its implementation. Also in this case, the Funds were to be allocated in two instalments: the First Instalment, which was sent on 31 May 2021 and the Second Instalment to be sent upon the Project's completion.
25. On the same day, the Respondent signed a memorandum to World Aquatics for 2021 OASP through which he committed to use the Funds exclusively for the Project.
26. To receive the Second Instalment, the Respondent had to submit the Final Report, documenting all expenses incurred. He did so on 29 November 2021, attesting that the Project had been delivered by Mr Morin during 2021.
27. By signing the Final Report, the Respondent committed to follow the rules and regulations of the OASP and certified that the information provided in such Final Report was a true and accurate summary of the expenditures related to the Project.
28. After receiving this documentation, World Aquatics paid the Second Instalment of 2021 OASP to LSF.
29. However, in the AQIU investigation initiated in December 2024, Mr Morin confirmed that he did not travel to Lebanon in 2021 and attached a copy of his passport as evidence. No entry or exit stamps from Lebanon in 2021 appear in his passport.
30. Also in this case, upon being asked for explanations as to why he provided a statement suggesting that he had indeed delivered the courses in 2021, Mr Morin stated that the Respondent had asked him to draft reports dated 2021 to facilitate compensation and reimbursement requests.
31. Therefore, according to the CECO, the Respondent violated Articles 2 a) and 2 b) of the World Aquatics (FINA) Code of Conduct and Article C.4 of the World Aquatics (FINA) Code of Ethics in force at the relevant time, by providing false information and documents to World Aquatics in 2021 to improperly obtain the Funds through the OASP.

### **iii. Alleged Abuse of Power and Other Misconduct**

32. According to the CECO, the Respondent, during his tenure as Secretary General of the LSF, also repeatedly abused his power and his position of authority. Specifically, the Respondent:
  - a. excluded the highest-ranked Lebanese athlete from selection for the World Aquatics Championships – 2023 Fukuoka without providing any justification;
  - b. threatened to withhold licenses in connection with the approval of club licenses, in order to maintain control over voting rights within the general assembly. Clubs perceived as loyal to the Respondent were granted approval, while other clubs that satisfied the applicable membership criteria were excluded if they were not perceived as loyal to him;
  - c. put pressure on a coach by threatening that non-compliance could jeopardize his coaching career, in order to favour certain athletes over others in training;
  - d. ensured that any official who disagreed with him or did not

comply with his orders would not be selected for competitions;

- e. falsely accused an official of being responsible for triggering a financial audit by World Aquatics and of leaking confidential documents to World Aquatics;<sup>1</sup>
- f. exhibited aggressive intimidating, and coercive behaviour towards an athlete and a coach after their participation in a competition in Switzerland in May 2024, during which the athlete participated in a relay with swimmers from another country. The Respondent falsely accused them of “cheating,” threatened them, and created an environment of fear that required intervention by other committee members;
- g. intimidated and made disparaging remarks to an athlete to try to prevent them from returning to competition in 2022; and
- h. requested organisers of competitions to conduct anti-doping tests on a Lebanese athlete who he did not want to see succeed after an event in Hungary in 2023.

33. Therefore, according to the CECO, the Respondent violated Articles 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, and 9.9 of the World Aquatics Integrity Code (the “Integrity Code”) by abusing his power and position of authority.

### **III. Procedural Background**

#### **A. Preliminary procedure before the CECO**

- 34. On 18 December 2024, the CECO notified the Respondent of the initiation of an investigation and provided him with an opportunity to submit his position on the matter. Pursuant to Article 21 of the Integrity Code, the CECO decided to impose a provisional suspension on the Respondent given that public confidence in the integrity of the sport of Aquatics was at risk.
- 35. On 27 December 2024, the Respondent submitted his written position, in which he denied the allegations made against him. He stated that there was no intention to cause offence and expressed sincere regret for any misunderstanding that may have arisen. The Respondent further indicated that he would attach photographs and supporting documentation to substantiate his position; however, no such materials were received.
- 36. On 20 January 2025, the CECO requested the Respondent to provide clarification regarding the supporting documentation referenced in his letter of 27 December 2024, which had not been enclosed. The CECO also invited the Respondent to submit his position in relation to additional allegations that had subsequently been reported to the AQIU.
- 37. On 27 January 2025, the Respondent submitted a partial response to the request for clarification, together with a further statement of his position. He reiterated that the LSF had consistently upheld the principles of professionalism, transparency, and fairness. According to the Respondent, any dissatisfaction expressed by certain individuals was likely attributable to the LSF’s commitment to equity, which may not have coincided with specific personal interests.

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<sup>1</sup> These allegations prompted the AQIU to initiate further inquiries into the LSF’s financial management, which support the conclusion that the Respondent would have submitted false financial information and documentation to World Aquatics in 2020 and 2021.

## **B. Main Procedure before the CECO**

### **i. The First Notice of Charge**

38. On 11 February 2025, based on all information and documents received and pursuant to Article 23 of the Integrity Code the CECO decided to formally charge the Respondent by means of a notice of charge (“Notice of Charge”) for possible violation of Articles 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and Article 9.9 of the Integrity Code:

i. Articles 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 - Duties of good conduct of the Integrity Code:

*5.1 Covered Persons must always act honestly, fairly, impartially and in accordance with the highest ethical standards of integrity and transparency.*

*5.2 Covered Persons must avoid any conduct that is inconsistent with or that undermines in any way the objectives of this Integrity Code.*

*5.3 Covered Persons must avoid acts or omissions that give the appearance of impropriety, or that disparage World Aquatics, or that bring (or have the potential to bring) World Aquatics, Aquatics and/or sport generally into disrepute.*

ii. Article 9.9 - Duty of undivided loyalty of the Integrity Code:

*9.9 Covered Persons must not abuse their position within Aquatics in any way, especially for their own aims or objectives.*

39. According to the Notice of Charge, the CECO determined that a suspension for a fixed period of four years from taking part in any aquatic-related activities and/or events on behalf of World Aquatics, and/or Continental Organisation and/or World Aquatics Member, as well as participating or attending, in any capacity, in any aquatic competition should be the applicable consequences in this case. The Respondent was advised that the investigation remains ongoing, and the list of charges may be supplemented at a later stage.

40. Furthermore, the Respondent was also informed that in accordance with Article 23.3 of the Integrity Code, he may respond to the Notice of Charge in one of the following ways:

- i. admit the charge and accept the consequences and sanction;
- ii. admit the charge, but dispute and/or seek to mitigate all or any of the potential consequences and have the AQIU adjudicatory body (“The Adjudicatory Body”) determine the consequences and sanction; or
- iii. deny the charge, and have the Adjudicatory Body determine the charge and any consequences and sanction.

### **ii. The Respondent’s Position to the First Notice of Charge**

41. On 17 February 2025, the Respondent denied the allegations against him and requested the Adjudicatory Body to determine the charge and any consequences and sanctions.

### **iii. The Second Notice of Charge**

42. Following developments in the investigation showing that the Respondent submitted false financial information and documents to World Aquatics in 2020 and 2021, the CECO – in addition to the

charges brought against the Respondent in the Notice of Charge of 11 February – decided to formally charge him with a possible violation of:

- i. Article C.4 of the FINA Code of Ethics (the “Code of Ethics”) in force at the time of the alleged violation which prohibits corrupt practices:

*“Betting on Aquatics **and other corrupt practices** relating to the sport of Aquatics by any person being subject to this Code, including improperly influencing the outcomes and results of an event or competition are prohibited.”*

- ii. Article 2 of the FINA Code of Conduct (the “Code of Conduct”) in force at the time of the alleged violation which prohibits acts of misbehaviours:

*“a) **acts of misbehaviour** including but not limited to abusive, violent conduct in a disturbing, ugly or provocative manner, unjustified interference including disobedience with obstruction of the orderly conduct of any sporting event within or outside of the venue(s), malicious alteration, damage or destruction of property or infliction of physical or mental harm on others.”*

- iii. Article 2 b) of the Code of Conduct in force at the time of the alleged violation which prohibits “falsification or alteration of documents and providing false information”:

*“b) cheating including but not limited to falsification or alteration of birth certificates, documents of identification or any other document indicating false age, false nationality **or any other false information** with the purpose of obtaining unfair advantage for an official, an athlete or a team.”*

43. According to the Second Notice of Charge, the CECO determined that a ten-year period of ineligibility from holding any position within World Aquatics, any World Aquatics Continental Organisation, or any World Aquatics Member Federation or recognised body and a fine of USD 50,000 – equivalent to the amount that has been misappropriated from World Aquatics – should be the applicable consequences in this case.

44. The suspension imposed on the Respondent shall also prevent him from taking part in any aquatic-related activities and/or events on behalf of World Aquatics, any World Aquatics Continental Organisation, or any World Aquatics Member Federation or recognised body, as well as participating or attending, in any capacity, in any aquatic competition.

45. Furthermore, the Respondent was also informed that in accordance with Article 23.3 of the Integrity Code, he may respond to the Notice of Charge in one of the following ways:

- iv. admit the charge and accept the consequences and sanction;
- v. admit the charge, but dispute and/or seek to mitigate all or any of the potential consequences and have the Adjudicatory Body determine the consequences and sanction; or
- vi. deny the charge, and have the Adjudicatory Body determine the charge and any consequences and sanction.

46. On 21 February 2025, the CECO sent a follow-up letter, including a

copy of Mr Morin's passport showing that no entry or exit stamps from Lebanon in 2020 or 2021 appear in his passport.

#### **iv. The Respondent's Position to the Second Notice of Charge**

47. On 24 February 2025, the Respondent denied the new allegations against him and requested the Adjudicatory Body to determine the charge and any consequences and sanctions.

#### **C. Procedure Before the Adjudicatory Body**

48. On 25 February 2025, the CECO referred the matter to the Adjudicatory Body.
49. On the same day, the Chair of the Adjudicatory Body, informed the Respondent of his rights, including the opportunity to challenge the composition of the Single-Member Panel and to provide additional information or written submissions regarding the charges brought against him.
50. On 5 March 2025, the Adjudicatory Body informed the Respondent that, as he had not submitted any additional information regarding the charges brought against him within the prescribed deadline, the Single-Member Panel considered itself sufficiently informed to proceed with the rendering of its decision.

### **IV. Considerations of the Adjudicatory Body**

#### **A. Jurisdiction, applicability of the Integrity Code and request for a hearing**

##### **i. Was the Respondent bound by the Integrity Code?**

51. Since, at the time of the violations, the Respondent served as Secretary General of the LSF, he falls within the definition of a "Covered Person" under Article 4.1 a) of the Integrity Code namely: "*persons who are, or are seeking to become (whether by election or appointment or otherwise) World Aquatics Officials or Other Officials.*"
52. World Aquatics Officials is defined in the Integrity Code as: "*Any person elected or appointed to any position within World Aquatics, a Continental Organisation or a World Aquatics Member, including but not limited to: - The President, Vice-Presidents, Bureau members, Honorary Life Presidents, Immediate Past President, Treasurer, and any candidates for election to the Bureau [...].*"
53. In accordance with Article 17 of the Integrity Code, the AQIU is responsible for adjudicating cases of potential violations of the Integrity Code.
54. Moreover, pursuant to Article 24 of the Integrity Code, the Adjudicatory Body of the AQIU is responsible for adjudicating cases where a respondent has denied the charges or requests laid by the CECO.

##### **ii. Was the Respondent bound by the Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct?**

55. Pursuant to article 4.3 of the Integrity Code: "For matters where the violation is alleged to have occurred before 1 January 2023 and concerning a person that has ceased to be subject to the World Aquatics Constitution and/or any World Aquatics Rules before 1 January 2023, both such person and World Aquatics shall be entitled to request at the start of the proceedings the procedure to be

conducted in accordance with the previous World Aquatics (FINA) Code of Ethics, World Aquatics (FINA) Code of Conduct, World Aquatics (FINA) Rules on the Prevention of the Manipulation of Competitions, and World Aquatics (FINA) Rules of Conduct Applicable to Bidders".

56. The Respondent was active as Secretary General of the LSF and therefore bound by the FINA Code of Ethics and FINA Code of Conduct in force at the time of the alleged violations in 2020 and 2021.
57. According to Article II - Scope of applicability of the Code of Ethics: *"This Code shall apply to all FINA members, FINA staff, persons elected or appointed to any position within the organization of FINA or the Continental Organizations (collectively referred to herein as "Officials"), and other individuals engaged in FINA activities. It shall also apply to consultants and contractually-connected persons/firms representing or serving FINA."*
58. Pursuant to Article 4 – Sanctions of the Code of Conduct: *"Any Member of FINA, or club, or team or individual person covered in this Code may be sanctioned by the FINA Disciplinary Panel in accordance with FINA Rule C 23.4."*
59. In light of the above, the Respondent was also bound by the Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct in force in 2020 and 2021, as he was the Secretary General of the LSF at that time also, and therefore an individual covered by these Codes.
60. The above shows that the AQIU, and, more precisely, the Adjudicatory Body, has jurisdiction over the case and is entitled to pass a decision on the basis of the Integrity Code.

## **B. Burden and Standard of Proof**

61. The above having been established, the Single-Member Panel recalled that, as a general rule, the AQIU has the burden of establishing that an integrity violation has been committed.
62. As per the Integrity Code, the standard of proof is the balance of probabilities. Facts shall be established by any reliable means. The Single-Member Panel shall at its own discretion determine the admissibility, relevance, materiality and weight of the evidence offered.
63. The principle of strict liability applies. Therefore, violations are punishable regardless of whether they have been committed intentionally, recklessly, and/or negligently.
64. Having clarified the foregoing, the Single-Member Panel proceeded to consider the merits of the case.

## **C. Merits of the case**

### **i. Did the Respondent submit false information and documents to World Aquatics?**

65. The Single-Member Panel notes at the outset that the evidence presented by the CECO establishes a consistent and credible pattern of conduct indicating that the Respondent submitted false information and falsified documents.
66. The clarifications provided by Mr Morin have been carefully assessed and are considered credible. In particular, the evidence submitted by

Mr Morin, including a copy of his passport, confirms that he did not travel to Lebanon in 2020 or 2021, as no entry or exit stamps from Lebanon appear in his passport for that period.

67. Furthermore, the photographs submitted by the Respondent to World Aquatics in the context of the OASP as evidence of the courses allegedly conducted by Mr Morin in 2020 and 2021 were assessed and found to originate from a different year. The images depict individuals not wearing masks, which is inconsistent with the COVID-19 protocols in place at the time. Additional contextual factors reinforce this conclusion: Lebanon was under strict lockdown measures during the period of the alleged sessions: the Beirut port blast in 2020, together with the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, severely restricted travel to the country.
68. On the basis of the foregoing, the Single-Member Panel concludes that the Respondent knowingly provided false information and documents with the intent to fraud World Aquatics.

## **ii. Did the Respondent abuse his position?**

69. The position advanced by the CECO, namely that the Respondent repeatedly abused his power and position of authority within the LSF, is supported by consistent, detailed, and credible witness statements. These statements were provided by individuals with no apparent motive to offer false or misleading evidence and are mutually corroborative on material points. Conversely, the Respondent has failed to adduce any evidence capable of credibly or conclusively rebutting these allegations or to provide a coherent alternative explanation for the conduct described.
70. In particular, one LSF official reported that the Respondent repeatedly demonstrated authoritarian behaviour, exerting pressure on LSF officials to comply with his directives and creating an atmosphere of intimidation within the Federation. The official stated that they feared potential repercussions for refusing to comply, recalling that the Respondent had warned them that "*either you are with me or against me.*" Following disagreements related to the participation of athletes at the Tokyo Olympic Games and other World Championships, the same official reported that they were deliberately sidelined, as their club's swimmers attended these events without their involvement. The Respondent allegedly justified this exclusion on various pretexts and implied that continued opposition could jeopardize the official's coaching career.
71. The witness further indicated that the Respondent routinely employed a "*carrot and stick*" approach to secure compliance, leveraging his position to influence outcomes and manipulate decision-making processes. The Respondent was also said to have bent or selectively applied rules to serve his personal interests, under the pretext of acting in the best interests of the LSF. The official additionally reported that the Respondent sought to interfere with club-level training programmes by pressuring them to exclude certain swimmers from participation.
72. The Respondent's inappropriate and unprofessional conduct was also directed towards athletes. Witnesses described that he: (i) minimized achievements, by dismissing athletes' records and asserting that they would soon be surpassed; (ii) undermined confidence, by making discouraging remarks before competitions, such as "*Are you ready to lose?*"; and (iii) made disparaging remarks,

including suggestions that certain athletes should retire.

73. Other witnesses reported that the Respondent restricted access to officiating courses, allowing only individuals loyal to him to participate. International referees who opposed the administration were reportedly excluded. As a result, unqualified referees were appointed, which led to significant errors during championships. Additionally, certified coaches were denied approval to conduct training sessions, while those favoured by the Respondent were granted authorisation.
74. The Respondent was further described as manipulating the approval of new club licences in order to maintain control over voting members in the General Assembly. Clubs demonstrating loyalty to the Respondent were favoured, whereas other clubs that met the necessary membership criteria were denied participation.
75. Taken together, these accounts portray a sustained pattern of behaviour through which the Respondent sought to exert undue influence over both sporting and administrative matters, interfere with independent decision-making, and retaliate against individuals perceived as non-compliant or disloyal.
76. Having reviewed the evidence filed by the CECO, the Single-Member Panel is comfortably satisfied that the Respondent systematically and knowingly exploited his position of authority in a manner incompatible with the principles of fairness, impartiality, and good governance enshrined in the World Aquatics regulatory framework. The Respondent's conduct constitutes a deliberate and serious abuse of power, exercised for personal advantage and control, to the detriment of athletes, officials, and the integrity of the LSF. Such conduct is wholly inconsistent with the standards of integrity and propriety expected of officials holding positions of trust within the sport.

**iii. Did the Respondent violate Article C.4 of the FINA Code of Ethics?**

77. Article C.4 of the FINA Code of Ethics, in force at the time of the alleged violation, which prohibits corrupt practices, stipulates as follows:

*"Betting on Aquatics and **other corrupt practices** relating to the sport of Aquatics by any person being subject to this Code, including improperly influencing the outcomes and results of an event or competition are prohibited."*
78. The Single-Member Panel considers that submitting false financial information and documents to World Aquatics to obtain OASP-related subsidies clearly falls within the scope of corrupt practices within the meaning of Article C.4 of the FINA Code of Ethics.
79. In light of the foregoing, the Single-Member Panel deems that the Respondent violated Article C.4 of the Code of Ethics.

**iv. Did the Respondent violate Article 2 a) of the FINA Code of Conduct?**

80. Article 2, paragraph a) of the FINA Code of Conduct, in force at the time of the alleged violation, which prohibits acts of misbehaviour, stipulates as follows:

*"a) **acts of misbehaviour** including but not limited to abusive, violent conduct in a disturbing, ugly or provocative manner, unjustified interference including disobedience with obstruction of the orderly*

*conduct of any sporting event within or outside of the venue(s), malicious alteration, damage or destruction of property or infliction of physical or mental harm on others.”*

81. The Single-Member Panel considers that submitting false financial information and documents to World Aquatics to obtain OASP-related subsidies clearly falls within the scope of acts of misbehaviour within the meaning of Article 2, paragraph a) of the Code of Conduct.
82. In light of the foregoing, the Single-Member Panel deems that the Respondent violated Article 2, paragraph a) of the Code of Conduct.

**v. Did the Respondent violate Article 2 b) of the FINA Code of Conduct?**

83. Article 2, paragraph b) of the FINA Code of Conduct, in force at the time of the alleged violation, which prohibits falsification or alteration of documents and providing false information, stipulates as follows:  
*“b) cheating including but not limited to falsification or alteration of birth certificates, documents of identification or **any other document indicating** false age, false nationality or **any other false information** with the purpose of obtaining unfair advantage for an official, an athlete or a team.”*
84. The Single-Member Panel considers that submitting false financial information and documents to World Aquatics to obtain OASP-related subsidies clearly falls within the scope of falsification or alteration of documents and providing false information within the meaning of Article 2, paragraph b) of the Code of Conduct. This provision is not confined to instances of cheating within the context of Aquatics competitions but also extends to conduct within the governance of Aquatics, where the integrity of administrative processes and the proper allocation of resources are equally fundamental to the principles of fairness, transparency, and good faith.
85. By submitting falsified financial documentation and misleading information, the Respondent intentionally sought to deceive World Aquatics in order to obtain funding for projects that were never carried out, and the ultimate use of the disbursed funds remains unknown. Such conduct constitutes a deliberate and serious breach of integrity, undermining the credibility of World Aquatics' development programmes and distorting the fair and equitable distribution of resources. It therefore falls squarely within the scope of Article 2, paragraph (b) of the Code of Conduct.
86. In light of the foregoing, the Single-Member Panel deems that the Respondent violated Article 2, paragraph b) of the Code of Conduct.

**vi. Did the Respondent violate Article 5.1 of the Integrity Code?**

87. Articles 5.1 of the Integrity Code stipulates as follows:  
*“Covered Persons must always act honestly, fairly, impartially and in accordance with the highest ethical standards of integrity and transparency.”*
88. After reviewing the full case file, the Single-Member Panel considers it has been established that the Respondent failed to act honestly, fairly, impartially and in accordance with the highest ethical standards of integrity, as he was required to do pursuant to Article 5.1 of the Integrity Code.

89. In this regard, the Single-Member Panel observes that the Respondent, in his capacity as Secretary General of the LSF at the time of the relevant events, was under a heightened obligation to exemplify and uphold these principles. However, he failed to meet these standards.
90. The Respondent's conduct including threats, inappropriate and unprofessional remarks directed at athletes and coaches, as well as attempts to obstruct athletes' participation in international competitions, to diminish their achievements, and to undermine their confidence, together with the appointment of officials based solely on personal loyalty, represents a serious departure from the ethical standards required under Article 5.1 of the Integrity Code. Such behaviour constitutes a misuse of authority for personal gain, to the detriment of other athletes and the integrity of the selection process.
91. In light of the foregoing, the Single-Member Panel deems that the Respondent violated Article 5.1 of the World Aquatics Integrity Code.

#### **vii. Did the Respondent violate Article 5.2 of the Integrity Code?**

92. Article 5.2 of the Integrity Code stipulates as follows:

*"Covered Persons must avoid any conduct that is inconsistent with or that undermines in any way the objectives of this Integrity Code."*
93. The Objectives of the Integrity Code can be found in Articles 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 of the Integrity Code:

*"1.1 World Aquatics has adopted this Integrity Code to establish clear integrity standards for persons involved in the activities of World Aquatics, to protect the health, safety and well-being of Athletes, to prohibit conduct that might undermine public confidence in the integrity of Aquatics and/or in the uncertainty of outcome of Events, and to establish effective mechanisms for enforcement of this Integrity Code and sanctions for any violation."*

*"1.2 World Aquatics is committed to uphold integrity in the governance and administration of Aquatics as a basic principle of good governance and as a fundamental precept of its autonomous role as the governing body of Aquatics worldwide, in the best interests of the sport and its stakeholders."*

*"1.3 World Aquatics is also committed to uphold the integrity of Aquatics on the field of play. The essence of the Aquatics disciplines is the contest between competing athletes and teams as an honest test of skill and ability, the outcome of which is determined by (and only by) the contestants' relative sporting merits. Any manipulation of sports competitions or other conduct that might undermine public confidence in the integrity of the sporting contest and/or in the uncertainty of its outcome is fundamentally at odds with that essence of the Aquatics disciplines and must be eradicated at all costs."*
94. Thus, Article 5.2 aims to prohibit conduct that might undermine public confidence in the integrity of Aquatics, including decisions that are not made in the best interests of the sport, its stakeholders, or the fundamental principle of fair and transparent competition.
95. After reviewing the full case file, the Single-Member Panel is satisfied that the Respondent's conduct had the clear potential to undermine public confidence in the integrity of Aquatics. Such behaviour, including attempts to obstruct athletes' participation in international

competitions, to diminish their achievements, and to undermine their confidence, together with the appointment of officials based solely on personal loyalty, compromises the fundamental principles of fairness and merit-based competition. It also erodes trust in Aquatics institutions, particularly where the public may perceive that selection processes are subject to improper influence, personal interests, or coercion.

96. Furthermore, by engaging in conduct involving threats and inappropriate or unprofessional remarks directed at athletes and coaches, the Respondent acted in a manner wholly inconsistent with the objectives and spirit of the Integrity Code.
97. In light of the foregoing, the Single-Member Panel deems that the Respondent clearly violated Article 5.2 of the World Aquatics Integrity Code.

#### **viii. Did the Respondent violate Article 5.3 of the Integrity Code?**

98. Article 5.3 of the Integrity Code stipulates as follows:

*“Covered Persons must avoid acts or omissions that give the appearance of impropriety, or that disparage World Aquatics, or that bring (or have the potential to bring) World Aquatics, Aquatics and/or sport generally into disrepute.”*

99. In this respect, the Single-Member Panel considers that the Respondent's actions give rise to a strong and objective appearance of impropriety. For the chair of the Adjudicatory Body, there is no doubt that a secretary general of a national federation who threatens athletes and coaches, makes inappropriate and unprofessional remarks towards them, obstructs their participation in international competitions, diminishes their achievements, and undermines their confidence, gives rise to an appearance of impropriety. Such conduct is incompatible with the ethical standards expected of an individual holding a position of influence within a sports federation. It is especially unacceptable when it comes from one of the highest-ranking officials in a national federation, *i.e.* the secretary general, who is expected to exemplify integrity, impartiality, and leadership at all times.
100. In light of the foregoing, the Single-Member Panel deems that the Respondent violated Article 5.3 of the World Aquatics Integrity Code.

#### **ix. Did the Respondent violate Article 9.9 of the Integrity Code?**

101. Article 9.9 of the Integrity Code provides as follows:

*“Covered Persons must not abuse their position within Aquatics in any way, especially for their own aims or objectives”.*

102. Lastly, the Single-Member Panel is satisfied that the Respondent engaged in a pattern of conduct that constitutes a clear misuse of authority.
103. Upon review of the full case file, the evidence reveals a pattern of behaviour indicative of a deliberate and sustained abuse of power by the Respondent. In particular, access to officiating courses appears to have been restricted to individuals deemed loyal to the Respondent, while other experienced international referees were reportedly excluded.
104. Moreover, the selection of athletes for international competitions was overseen directly by the Respondent and a small circle of executive

members, effectively bypassing established selection procedures. Similarly, certified coaches were reportedly denied authorisation to conduct training sessions without valid justification, while others with apparent personal ties to the Respondent were granted such approval.

105. In addition, the evidence suggests that the Respondent manipulated the approval process for new club licenses in order to consolidate control over voting members in the general assembly. Clubs perceived as loyal to the Respondent were favoured, while others that met all formal membership requirements were denied participation on arbitrary grounds.
106. Taken together, these actions reflect a systematic and intentional abuse of authority, incompatible with the responsibilities and ethical standards expected of a senior official within a national sports federation. Such conduct gravely undermines the principle of merit-based competition and the broader trust placed in sporting bodies to act with neutrality, integrity, and fairness.
107. In light of the foregoing, the Single-Member Panel deems that the Respondent violated Article 9.9 of the World Aquatics Integrity Code.

**x. The Respondent failed to provide his position before the Adjudicatory Body**

108. The Single-Member Panel notes that, despite being given the opportunity to do so, the Respondent has failed to submit a written position before the Adjudicatory Body. Aside from the arguments he previously presented before the CECO, in which he denied the allegations, no further written submissions have been made part of the record.
109. The Respondent relied solely on general assertions that he has always discharged his responsibilities with transparency and professionalism. However, mere self-declarations are insufficient to rebut the serious allegations presented which offer substantive and detailed indications of behaviours in breach of the World Aquatics Integrity Code, Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct.
110. Furthermore, the Respondent's broad statement that he has never engaged in any behaviour that could reasonably be considered a violation of ethical standards does not amount to a defence, nor does it effectively challenge the evidence on record. In contrast, the documentation collected during the investigation highlights specific instances of misconduct, which are well-supported and credible. Accordingly, this line of argument must be dismissed.
111. In line with the above, the Respondent's claim that his conduct has always been guided by integrity, professionalism, and the absence of personal financial gain must equally be dismissed. This assertion is directly contradicted by extensive documentation gathered during the investigation, which demonstrates that the Respondent provided false financial information and submitted falsified documents to World Aquatics in 2020 and 2021.

**D. Applicable Sanction**

112. As per Article 33.1 of the Integrity Code, the sanctions that can be imposed range from a reprimand to a lifetime suspension.
113. Pursuant to Article 33.3 of the Integrity Code, aggravating factors that are relevant to this case may include:

a) *the age or experience or position of trust or authority of the Covered Person;*

[...]

c) *any finding that the Covered Person violated more than one Article of this Integrity Code or violated the same Article more than once;*

d) *any finding that the Covered Person received or expected to receive a significant Benefit as a result of their violation;*

e) *any finding that the Covered Person's violation affected or had the potential to affect the course or outcome of an Event;*

[...]

114. The Single-Member Panel considers that these aggravating factors are applicable in the present case.

115. The Respondent is an experienced official and former Secretary General of a World Aquatics Member. Accordingly, the aggravating factor under Article 33.3 a) of the Integrity Code is found to be present.

116. Moreover, the Respondent's actions were in clear breach of the Integrity Code, specifically Articles 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, and 9.9, as well as of the previous Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct, namely Article C.4 and Articles 2 a) and 2 b), respectively. Accordingly, the aggravating factor under Article 33.3 c) of the Integrity Code is found to be present.

117. The Respondent further committed the above-described conduct in full knowledge and at the expense of World Aquatics and aquatics in general. Although it remains unclear as to how the funds disbursed by World Aquatics to the LSF were used or where they were ultimately allocated, the final damage caused by the Respondent to World Aquatics amounts to USD 50,000. Accordingly, the aggravating factor under Article 33.3 d) of the Integrity Code is found to be present.

118. Lastly, the Respondent's conduct, including influencing the athlete selection process and obstructing participation in international competitions, denying authorisation to certified coaches to conduct training sessions, and manipulating the club licensing process to consolidate control over voting members, contributed to a distortion of fair competition and governance, with the potential to directly affect the course and outcome of events. Accordingly, the aggravating factor under Article 33.3 e) of the Integrity Code is found to be present.

119. The AQIU must take a firm stance against officials who abuse their power, provide false information to World Aquatics and misuse the financial support intended for the development and promotion of aquatics at all levels within their territories.

120. Such conduct is wholly unacceptable and must be unequivocally condemned. It is essential that actions of this nature be strongly discouraged, as they undermine the trust and confidence that both the sporting community and the public place in the proper governance of sport. Accordingly, it is essential to impose a severe sanction that serves as a deterrent, ensuring that such misconduct is not repeated in the future.

121. With respect to the length of the period of ineligibility, the Single-

Member Panel notes that in a similar case of submission of false information in order to request reimbursements from World Aquatics committed by the former President of the Chilean Swimming Federation, the Adjudicatory Body imposed a twenty-year suspension on him.

122. In another similar case involving the submission of false information to World Aquatics to obtain reimbursements through the OASP, the Adjudicatory Body imposed suspensions of up to ten years on four officials of the Haitian Federation of Aquatic Sports.
123. These precedents underscore the severity with which such violations are addressed and reinforce the need for consistent and proportionate sanctions.<sup>2</sup>
124. In view of the above, the Single-Member Panel concurs with the need to impose a firm sanction. This measure is not only warranted in light of the Respondent's conduct but is also vital to serve as a deterrent against future misconduct of a similar nature. Upholding the credibility of the Aquatic sport requires clear and consistent consequences for breaches of the Integrity Code at the highest level.
125. Therefore, the Single-Member Panel hereby determines that the following disciplinary measures constitute an appropriate, proportional and just sanction for the Respondent:
  - i. a ten-year period of ineligibility from holding any position within World Aquatics, any World Aquatics Continental Organisation, any World Aquatics Member Federation, any club or any other recognised body. The suspension imposed on the Respondent shall also prevent him from taking part in, or attending in any capacity, any aquatic-related activities or events organised by World Aquatics, any World Aquatics Continental Organisation, any World Aquatics Member Federation, any club or any other recognised body; and
  - ii. a fine of USD 50,000 equivalent to the amount that has been misappropriated from World Aquatics. Failure to pay the fine shall prevent the Respondent from holding any position within World Aquatics, any World Aquatics Continental Organisation, any World Aquatics Member Federation, any club or any other recognised body as well as from taking part in, or attending in any capacity, any aquatic-related activities or events organised by World Aquatics, any World Aquatics Continental Organisation, any World Aquatics Member Federation, any club or any other recognised body, until payment is made.

#### **E. Start Date of the Period of Ineligibility and Credit for Provisional Suspension**

126. Pursuant to Article 33.6 of the Integrity Code, any period of ineligibility imposed under Article 33 shall commence on the date it is imposed by the Adjudicatory Body, or otherwise accepted by the Covered Person, with credit given for any period of provisional suspension served and complied with.
127. In the present case, the Respondent was provisionally suspended by the CECO on 18 December 2024. Accordingly, the period served under the provisional suspension shall be credited against the period of ineligibility imposed.

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<sup>2</sup> See also, among others, CAS 2019/A/6344 and CAS 2018/A/6072

## **V. Decision of the Adjudicatory Body**

**The Single-Member Panel of the Adjudicatory Body of the Aquatics Integrity Unit rules that:**

- (i) The Aquatics Integrity Unit has jurisdiction over this matter.**
- (ii) The Respondent has violated Article 2 a) and b) of the World Aquatics (FINA) Code of Conduct, Article C.4 of the World Aquatics (FINA) Code of Ethics and Articles 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 9.9 of the World Aquatics Integrity Code.**
- (iii) The Respondent is sanctioned with a ten-year period of ineligibility from holding any position within World Aquatics, any World Aquatics Continental Organisation, any World Aquatics Member Federation, any club or any other recognised body. The suspension imposed on the Respondent shall also prevent him from taking part in, or attending in any capacity, any aquatic-related activities or events organised by World Aquatics, any World Aquatics Continental Organisation, any World Aquatics Member Federation, any club or any other recognised body. The period of ineligibility shall commence on the date the Respondent was provisionally suspended (i.e., 18 December 2024).**
- (iv) The Respondent is sanctioned with a fine of USD 50,000. Failure to pay the fine shall prevent the Respondent from holding any position within World Aquatics, any World Aquatics Continental Organisation, any World Aquatics Member Federation, any club or any other recognised body as well as from taking part in, or attending in any capacity, any aquatic-related activities or events organised by World Aquatics, any World Aquatics Continental Organisation, any World Aquatics Member Federation, any club or any other recognised body, until payment is made.**
- (v) This decision is rendered without costs and will be made public.**
- (vi) As per Article 35 of the World Aquatics Integrity Code, this decision can be appealed to CAS within twenty-one (21) calendar days of the appealing Party's receipt of the written reasoned decision in question by email.**

Lausanne, 11 December 2025

On behalf of the Adjudicatory Body of the Aquatics Integrity Unit:



Raymond Hack  
Single-Member Panel of the Aquatics Integrity Unit