

On October 18, 2017 the FIDE Anti-Cheating Committee (ACC) received an In-Tournament Complaint (the Complaint) concerning an alleged incident that has occurred during the 2017 World Youth Chess Championship which took place September 16-26, 2017 in Montevideo, Uruguay. The Complaint was submitted by Mr. Eugeny Solozhenkin, GM (Russia), on behalf of his 14y old daughter Elizaveta Solozhenkina. The Complaint accused 13y old player Bibisara Assaubayeva (Russia) of using electronic means to communicate with another person to analyze her game during the second round. The ACC also received report from Mr. Hal Bond (Canada), the chief arbiter of the event (“the Arbiter”).

Pursuant to the Anti-Cheating Guidelines, an Investigatory Chamber (IC) was appointed on November 4, 2017, to investigate Mr. Solozhenkin's Complaint. The IC consisted of Mr. Konstantin Landa (Russia), Mr. Klaus Deventer (Germany), and Yuliya Levitan (USA) as the chairperson.

I. Investigation

The IC sent inquiries for clarification to both parties and the Arbiter, and received a report from Professor Ken Regan.

Statements of the Arbiter

Immediately after the complaint, he contacted Professor Ken Regan about monitoring the games in general and of the accused, in particular. Prof. Regan did not find a concern with the games played by the accused.

The Organizers had one person monitoring the washroom area at all times, to ensure it was used by players only. One of the female arbiters would follow the accused girl to the washroom often, but not always. No concerns arose from these observations.

The metal detectors were received only in time to be used starting with round 5 and were used during all remaining rounds. The accused was checked during the 5th round. Mr. Solozhenkin requested that the accused player’s ears be checked by the Arbiter, but he felt this was too intrusive. During the rounds, he approached the girl’s game on multiple occasions and he did not detect anything in either ear.

The broadcast of the games was occasionally delayed or interrupted throughout the tournament, with many games of the accused being affected.

Statements of Eugeny Solozhenkin

First, Mr. Solozhenkin clarified that his daughter did not contact an arbiter immediately upon learning of the alleged cheating because there were no Russian-speaking arbiters and there was a need to prepare for the afternoon round. He alleged that he did briefly speak with the Arbiter during the third round, but without disclosing the substance of the matter. The Arbiter recommended they reconvene at the beginning of the fourth round next day. During that meeting the allegation was disclosed and, subsequently, formalized in the form of the Complaint.

Second, Mr. Solozhenkin alleges he spoke to a witness that was stationed near the bathroom during all rounds and that witness never observed the accused being accompanied by an arbiter there. This statement is a hearsay, not based on personal knowledge. And it also contradicts statements from the Arbiter. Even assuming the witness came forward and contacted the IC, it is highly improbable that a person would spend hours at a time for days at a time just staring at the bathroom door as to notate who goes in and out. Even if such person were to admit that it was not doing so for 5 minutes a day, it would make all testimony less probable that the Arbiter's version of events was incorrect. As such, the IC will disregard this allegation.

Third, Mr. Solozhenkin made several comments about Mrs. Liana Tanzharikova's (mother of the accused girl) statements on social media and Russian chess sites. In addition, he called the IC's attention to the facts as to what hotel the accused's family was staying and to the alleged lack of complaint about the inspections by the accused's family to the representative of the Russian chess federation. While such information may (or may not) have a bearing on the pending Ethics Commission complaint by Mrs. Tanzharikova against Mr. Solozhenkin for making public accusations of cheating ("the Ethics complaint"), it has no bearing to the instant investigation.

Finally, and most importantly, Mr. Solozhenkin conceded that there are no witnesses to corroborate his daughter's allegation as to what has transpired in the bathroom.

Statements of Mrs. Liana Tanzharikova

Mrs. Tanzharikova stated that her daughter, Bibisara Assaubayeva, denies making any chess comments/questions (even to herself) during the situation in question. She also claims that her daughter does not have an individual phone, both during the chess tournaments and in her everyday life.

Report from Professor Ken Regan

The report from Professor Ken Regan ("Regan report") stated that the results of both the initial screening done on September 20, 2017, and the full test performed at a later date showed no evidence of computer cheating by the accused at the tournament in question.

II. **Additional facts**

The Chairperson also read the statements made by Mr. Solozhenkin on the Russian chess site, specifically:

<http://www.chess-news.ru/node/23790>

<http://chess-news.ru/node/23831>

While most of the information in those publications may be relevant for the Ethics complaint, it is not relevant for the instant investigation. Two items warrant exception and will be mentioned below.

Mr. Solozhenkin made it very clear that he suspected Ms. Assaubayeva of cheating for quite some time. While he does not affirmatively state so, it is very probable that he shared his

suspicions with his daughter. And those suspicions were the driving force of why Ms. Elizaveta Solozhenkina followed Ms. Assaubayeva to the bathroom and why she was listening to what Ms. Assaubayeva was doing while in the closed bathroom stall.

In one publication, Mr. Solozhenkin posted several screen posts of the texts that Ms. Solozhenkina allegedly sent her mother wherein she tells the story about how Ms. Assaubayeva is a cheater. Assuming the pictures are accurate and true representation of the facts (texts/dates/times/recipients), they support the proposition that Ms. Solozhenkina believed she heard the alleged statements. However, they do not prove that Ms. Assaubayeva actually said the alleged statements.

III. Analysis

Here, we have a situation when there is an accusation but no independent evidence that would sustain the accusation: (1) the accused denies that the statements were made and there are no witnesses to the alleged incident, (2) the accused was checked by a metal detector and nothing was found, and (3) Regan report states that there was no evidence of electronic cheating.

Taking all the facts into consideration, the IC unanimously believes that in the instant case the accusation of electronic cheating has not been sustained. Also, the IC have concluded that because Ms. Solozhenkina believed that she had heard the incriminating statements, the accusation was not unfounded. Therefore, the IC recommends closing the matter without recommending any sanctions for either party.

IV. Accusations against IC's integrity

Mrs. Tanzharikova made unsubstantiated statements accusing the IC member Konstantin Landa of taking bribes to make a decision against her daughter. She made it both directly to Mr. Landa and to the chairperson Ms. Levitan. Mrs. Tanzharikova supported her claim to Ms. Levitan by relying on phone texts/emails from third persons. Initially, Ms. Levitan advised Mrs. Tanzharikova not to pay any heed to such rumors and insinuations and emphasizing Mr. Landa's integrity, but Mrs. Tanzharikova persisted in her accusations. The IC lacks standing to proceed further on this baseless accusation, but believes the ACC should be apprised of this development. While it is understandable that Mrs. Tanzharikova would be upset that a serious accusation without substantial proof has been made against her daughter, she should not have made an equally serious accusation also without any proof (here, repeat the accusation she was told by a third party) against the IC member.