

**IN THE MATTER OF A NOTICE OF OFFENSE OF ALLEGED
CORRUPTION OFFENSES UNDER THE TENNIS ANTI-CORRUPTION
PROGRAM**

LUC FOMBA

and

INTERNATIONAL TENNIS INTEGRITY AGENCY

DECISION ON SANCTION

Before Anti-Corruption Hearing Officer:

Amani Khalifa

**Representing the International Tennis Integrity
Agency:**

Bird & Bird LLP

Representing Luc Fomba:

Representing himself

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Mr. Luc Fomba (the *Covered Person* or the *Player*) is a professional tennis player who has participated in tennis tournaments worldwide. His most recent appearance was at M15 Monastir, between 21-27 April 2025.
2. On 25 April 2025, pursuant to Section F.4. of the 2025 Tennis Anti-Corruption Program (*TACP*), the International Tennis Integrity Agency (*ITIA*) issued a Notice of Offense (the *Notice*) to the Player. The Notice informed the Player that he was being charged with various breaches of the 2022 and 2023 TACP.
3. The charges relate to the Player's involvement in several professional tennis tournaments between 2022 and 2023, during which it is alleged that he failed to report to the ITIA: (i) that he knew or suspect that another player contrived or attempted to contrive the outcome of a match, and (ii) that he received an offer of payment along with a request to influence the outcome of a match, in breach of Sections D.2.a.i and ii of the TACP. The particulars of these charges are set out in Section III below.
4. The Notice informed the Player of his right to have this matter determined at a Hearing before the AHO if he disputed the ITIA's allegations. To exercise this right, the Player was required to submit a written request for a Hearing within ten (10) Business Days from receipt of the Notice.
5. Between 13 May and 2 June 2025, the Player responded to the Notice via a series of emails in which he admitted to all Corruption Offenses listed in the Notice (the *Charges*), but sought mitigation of the sanctions proposed by the ITIA in the Notice in accordance with Section F.6.b.i of the 2025 TACP. The Player's position was formally confirmed during a procedural hearing convened on 17 June 2025 before AHO Khalifa, with Mr. Alasdair Muller and Mr. Zac Randall (Bird & Bird LLP) appearing on behalf of the International Tennis Integrity Agency, and the Player representing himself.
6. Ms. Amani Khalifa holds the appointment as an AHO as in accordance with section F.1 of the 2025 TACP. The AHO was appointed without objection by

either party as to the manner of her appointment or to her independence and impartiality.

7. Pursuant to Section G.1.d of the 2025 TACP, the AHO is now issuing a decision confirming the Charges and imposing sanctions on the Player.

II. THE APPLICABLE LAW AND JURISDICTION

8. The applicable rules are the 2022 and 2023 TACP with regards to the Offenses and the 2025 TACP with regards to the procedure.
9. Neither party has objected to the appointment of the AHO to hear this matter. She has been properly appointed and seized of the matters in dispute.
10. No other matters relating to the AHO's jurisdiction or any other preliminary or procedural objections were raised by either party.

III. THE NOTICE OF OFFENSE

11. The ITIA provided a summary of the evidence on which it relies in the Notice. That evidence relates to the following matches:

(a) **Match 1:** Singles match on [REDACTED] October 2022 between Mr. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and Mr. [REDACTED] in the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] tournament in [REDACTED] (*Match 1*). Mr. [REDACTED] lost the match [REDACTED].

(b) **Match 2:** Doubles match on [REDACTED] March 2023 between the Player and Mr. [REDACTED] against Mr. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in the ATP Challenger tournament in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (*Match 2*). The Player and his partner lost the match [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

12. The Player has been charged with two (2) breaches of the 2022 and 2023 TACP. The ITIA provided the details of the Charges in the Notice, which are summarised and updated following the Player's admissions as follows:

- (a) **Charge 1:** One breach of section D.2.a.ii of the 2022 TACP, whereby he knew or suspected that Mr. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] contrived the outcome or an aspect of Match 1 in breach of Section D.1.d of the TACP and failed to report this to the ITIA.
 - (b) **Charge 2:** One breach of section D.2.a.i of the 2023 TACP, whereby he received from Mr. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] an offer of payment along with a request to influence the outcome of Match 2 and did not report this approach to the ITIA.
- 13. Under Section B of the Notice, the ITIA highlighted that the penalty for any breach of the TACP shall be determined by the AHO in accordance with Section G of the 2025 TACP, which may include a fine of up to \$250,000, repayment of corrupt payments, and permanent ineligibility.
 - 14. Under Section C of the Notice, the ITIA proposed that in accordance with Section F.6.a.iv of the 2025 TACP, it had determined that the appropriate sanction would be a period of ineligibility of 4.5 months, and a fine of \$1,500 (with an additional \$3,500 payable if the Player was found to commit a further breach of the TACP within his sanction period). This determination by the ITIA incorporated a 25% discount for early acceptance of the sanction on the basis that the Player would not appeal it.
 - 15. Under Section D of the Notice, the ITIA also highlighted that the Player was entitled to have the matter determined by the AHO at a Hearing if he disputed the ITIA's allegations or, wished to dispute and/or request a reduction in the sanction proposed by the ITIA. The Notice provided the details of the procedure and the deadline for submitting a request for a Hearing.

IV. THE PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

- 16. On 25 April 2025, the ITIA issued the Notice to the Player outlining the Charges. The Player was given ten (10) Business Days to submit a written request for a Hearing.

17. Between 13 May and 2 June 2025, the Player responded to the Notice via a series of emails, admitting the Charges in their entirety, but noting that he was seeking a reduction in the sanction proposed by the ITIA in the Notice in accordance with Section F.6.b.i. of the 2025 TACP.
18. On 3 June 2025, Professor Richard McLaren confirmed the appointment of Amani Khalifa as AHO.
19. On 17 June 2025, the Parties attended a procedural hearing convened pursuant to Section G.1.f of the 2025 TACP. The AHO, having noted the respective positions of the Parties, which included the Player confirming that he admitted to the Charges in their entirety, decided that the matter would proceed to submissions on sanction.
20. On 18 June 2025, the AHO issued directions setting out, amongst other things, the procedural timetable. The Parties were directed to provide their respective submissions in accordance with those directions, following which, the AHO would issue her decision.
21. On 4 July 2025, the ITIA filed its opening brief, which included, amongst other things, the evidence on which it relies, and its submission on sanctions (the *Opening Brief*) as directed.
22. On 25 July 2025, in response to the Opening Brief, the Player filed his answer, seeking to mitigate the proposed sanctions (the *Player's Response*) as directed.
23. Pursuant to Section G.1.d.iii of the 2025 TACP, the AHO will decide the appropriate sanction in this case.

V. ITIA'S WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

24. The AHO has carefully considered the Opening Brief and the Player's Response which are summarised below. Additional facts and allegations found in the parties' submissions may be set out, where relevant, in connection with the discussion that follows. However, the AHO refers expressly in this decision

only to the submissions and evidence she considers necessary to explain her reasoning. All other submissions are subsumed in her analysis.

25. The ITIA explains that the present case arises from “Operation Dives,” an investigation into a Bulgarian-based organised crime syndicate that sought to fix matches through a network of trusted corrupters, including professional tennis players from France, Bulgaria, and Romania. The investigation began after the ITIA received suspicious betting alerts linked to French players Lucas Bouquet and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with Mr [REDACTED] identified as the central figure linking the syndicate to the players, fixing his own matches and approaching others to do the same. Analysis of Mr [REDACTED] mobile phone revealed wider involvement, including potential breaches of the TACP by several players, among them, Mr Luc Fomba.
26. The Player and Mr [REDACTED] are said to have been friends for nearly a decade, sharing the same professional and social networks. It was through this relationship that Mr [REDACTED] approached Mr Fomba with an offer to fix a match in return for payment. The TACP places a clear obligation on players to report any knowledge or suspicion of corrupt activity, yet the Player failed to report either his awareness of Mr [REDACTED] activities or the direct approach made to him. The Player has admitted the offences charged, accepting therefore that he is, in principle, liable to be sanctioned under the TACP.
27. The ITIA submits that in accordance with Section F.6 of the 2025 TACP, the maximum potential sanction in this matter is three (3) years of ineligibility from Sanctioned Events and a US\$40,000 fine.
28. Whilst recognising that the 2025 TACP Sanctioning Guidelines (the *Guidelines*) are not strictly binding on the AHO who has broad discretion to determine the sanction, the ITIA submits that the Guidelines should be followed in this case.
29. The ITIA submits that in line with the Guidelines, the Charges against the Player should be categorised B3. In support of this categorisation, the ITIA makes the following submissions.

30. The ITIA submits that with regards to culpability:
- (a) The Player displayed “*Some planning or premeditation*” in the offences with which he is charged, given the Player not only failed to reject Mr [REDACTED] corrupt approach but actively sought details on potential payment, initiated the exchange by informing Mr [REDACTED] of his upcoming tournament, and initially denied the offences until confronted with evidence by the ITIA.
31. While the ITIA does not explicitly make any arguments regarding the two other elements of Category B “*Medium Culpability*”, the evidence on which it relies suggest that the ITIA considers that the Player: (i) was “[a]cting in concert with others” through his communications with Mr. [REDACTED] and (ii) has in fact admitted “[s]everal offenses”.
32. The ITIA submits that with regards to impact:
- (a) The Player’s conduct involves “*TACP Offenses falling under Section... D.2*” (i.e., Category 3).
 - (b) The Player’s conduct had only a “[m]inor impact on the integrity or reputation of the sport”, notwithstanding the broader risks posed by failures to report corruption.
 - (c) There is no available evidence to demonstrate that the Player made an identifiable gain from either offence, as such, there was “...no material gain”.
33. The ITIA submits that the appropriate starting point for the Player is a ban of six (6) months, which a possible range between zero (0) months (amounting to an admonishment), up to a period of two (2) years. The ITIA submits that the AHO may consider any adjustment from the starting point for any aggravating or mitigating factors.
34. The ITIA acknowledges that the Player has “*acted responsibly and expressed some remorse*”, and is “*otherwise of good character*”, notwithstanding that the

Player was aware of his obligations under the TACP. The ITIA also submits that his failure to report the corrupt approach to the ITIA “*appears... to have been motivated by the fact he considered Mr [REDACTED] a friend, and/or that he did not wish to risk incriminating himself*”.

35. The ITIA notes that it had offered Mr Fomba a 25% reduction to the standard six-month suspension for a B3 offence if he accepted the sanction without appeal. However, it submits that under Section F.6.b of the TACP, an appeal includes cases where the offence is admitted but the sanction is contested, and the Notice made clear that such an appeal would forfeit the discount. Although the Player has admitted the offences, he disputes the sanction and has referred the matter to the AHO, requiring the ITIA to engage in formal proceedings. The ITIA therefore submits that no reduction for early admission should be applied.
36. With regards to the applicable fine, the ITIA proposes a US\$5,000 fine for the Player, reflecting that both offences were for non-reporting and there is no evidence of financial gain, with US\$2,500 of the fine suspended subject to no further corruption offences being committed during the suspension.
37. In summary, the ITIA requests the AHO to impose the following sanctions on the Player:
 - (a) a ban of six (6) months; and
 - (b) a fine of US\$5,000 (with US\$2,500 suspended).

VI. THE PLAYER’S WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

38. The Player submits that he is a person of strong character, shaped by years of disciplined training, academic achievement, and respect for the sport. At the time of the incident, he was a student-athlete in the United States, removed from the professional circuit and its culture, and had no malicious intent in his handling of the situation.

39. The Player highlights that the Notice contained factual errors which, although later acknowledged by the ITIA, affected his confidence in of process and which in his submission, underscore the need for a proportionate sanction.
40. With respect to the offences for which he is charged, he submits that the approach he received came from a long-standing friend, which he did not take seriously, and his decision not to report was, he says, a misguided attempt to avoid drama rather than to shield corruption.
41. The Player submits that the proposed sanction, a six-month suspension and a \$5,000 fine, would be disproportionately damaging to his fledgling professional career, especially as he is 26 and only now competing full-time. Financially, he relies on modest sponsorships, club matches, and family support, and the suspension would severely disrupt his ability to earn income, gain ranking points, and secure future opportunities. He also highlights the reputational harm such a sanction could cause, not just for himself but for those who look up to him as a role model. In his view, equating his non-reporting offence, which involved no active match-fixing, acceptance of money, or financial gain, with sanctions given to confirmed match-fixers, undermines fairness and the principle of proportionality.
42. Finally, the Player urges the AHO to consider the wider context in which players often receive unsolicited or suspicious messages, many of which go unreported, and to recognise his full cooperation and clean record. He reaffirms his commitment to tennis integrity, offers to participate in education efforts to prevent similar mistakes, and requests that the sanction be replaced with a formal warning. He stresses that such an outcome would better reflect the nature of his conduct, the absence of corrupt intent, and the serious impact a suspension would have on his life and career.

VII. REASONS

43. Match fixing is a serious threat to tennis. Once admitted to or proven, match fixing is a deliberate, intentional offense that threatens competition by eliminating the uncertainty which is the heart of professional tennis.

44. Lenient sanctions that do not reflect the seriousness of the underlying offenses would undermine the TACP's objectives. However, any sanction must be proportionate and consistent with the similar cases to promote certainty and fairness. There are two (2) charges against the Player under the 2022 and 2023 TACP which are summarised at paragraph 12 above.
45. The Guidelines provide that where there are multiple Corruption Offenses, in the interests of efficiency, they should be taken together in one concurrent sanctioning process – *i.e.*, a single sanction is imposed.
46. Section H.1 of the 2025 TACP provides that:
- Except as provided in Sections F.5., F.6. and F.7., the penalty for any Corruption Offense shall be determined by the AHO in accordance with the procedures set forth in Section G, and may include:
- H.1.a.** With respect to any Player, (i) a fine of up to \$250,000 plus an amount equal to the value of any winnings or other amounts received by such Covered Person in connection with any Corruption Offense, (ii) ineligibility from Participation in any Sanctioned Events for a period of up to three years unless permitted under Section H.1.c., and (iii) with respect to any violation of Section D.1., clauses (c)-(p), Section D.2. and Section F. ineligibility from Participation in any Sanctioned Events for a maximum period of permanent ineligibility unless permitted under Section H.1.c.
47. The Player has admitted the Charges in pursuant to Section G.1.d.iii, as confirmed by the AHO on 17 June 2025.
48. The case against the Player arose out of a match-fixing investigation involving an organized crime syndicate based in Bulgaria, which conspired to fix matches through players based in France, Bulgaria and Romania. The ITIA was alerted to the case following suspicious betting activity concerning matches in which other players participated.

49. The Player is said to have had knowledge of Mr. [REDACTED] corrupt activities, in which (i) he discussed the result of a match that Mr. [REDACTED] played in at the ITF [REDACTED] event in [REDACTED] and (ii) was approached by Mr. [REDACTED] to contrive the outcome of a match at the ATP Challenger Tour event in [REDACTED]. Subsequently, he was charged with two offences under Section D.2 of the 2022 and 2023 TACP for failing to report these activities in accordance with the TACP.
50. The ITIA is seeking the imposition of a fine of US\$5,000 (with US\$2,500 suspended) and a ban of six (6) months. The AHO is not bound to accept the sanction sought by the ITIA and must independently impose an appropriate, just, and proportionate sanction applying the TACP and the Guidelines, bearing in mind the circumstances of the case.
51. The Player seeks to mitigate those sanctions which are outlined in Section VI above.
52. AHOs retain full discretion in relation to the sanction imposed. However, the application of the Guidelines promotes fairness and consistency in sanctioning across tennis. Therefore, the AHO has followed the Guidelines to reach her decision.
53. The Guidelines set out a five step-process to determine the appropriate sanction as follows:
- (a) Determining the offense category;
 - (b) Starting point and category range;
 - (c) Consideration of reduction for early admissions;
 - (d) Consideration of other factors which may merit a reduction including substantial assistance; and
 - (e) Setting the amount of the fine (if any).

These are addressed in turn below.

A. DETERMINING THE OFFENSE CATEGORY

54. The AHO agrees with the ITIA's submission that the Player's level of culpability falls within Category B. The Player has committed "[s]everal offences" (albeit, only two) that involved "[s]ome planning or premeditation" in which he was "[a]cting in concert with others". On the evidence, there is no realistic basis for concluding that his actions fall within Category C culpability, as the factors typically associated with that category, such as little or no planning, the commission of a single offence, acting alone, or involvement through coercion, intimidation, or exploitation, are not established.
55. The AHO agrees with the ITIA's submission that the Player's conduct sits within Category 3 impact. The AHO concludes this categorisation for the following reasons:
- (a) The Player's conduct undoubtedly involves "*TACP offense(s) falling under Section... D.2*".
 - (b) The Player's conduct has resulted in a "[m]inor impact on the integrity and/or reputation of the sport". The Player failed to report two instances of match fixing to the ITIA. It is acknowledged that all match-fixing offenses damage the sport's reputation and integrity, and this impact may be exacerbated by the commission of multiple offenses over the relevant period. However, the AHO notes that the Player's conduct did not cause the outcome of the relevant matches to be manipulated.
 - (c) The Player's conduct has resulted in "... *no material gain*". There is no evidence to suggest that the Player received any payment related to the offences for which he is charged, however, the AHO does note that the Player was offered a sum by Mr. [REDACTED] in relation to Match 2 for which, if he had gone through with the proposed fix, would have resulted in material gain.
56. For these reasons, the AHO considers that the Player's offense category is B3.

B. STARTING POINT AND CATEGORY RANGE

57. Under the Guidelines, the starting point for a Category B3 offense is six (6) month suspension, with a range of 0 months (amounting to an admonishment) up to a period of two (2) years.
58. The AHO agrees that there are no aggravating factors to be considered, and therefore determines a starting point is a six (6) month suspension.

C. CONSIDERATION OF REDUCTION FOR EARLY ADMISSIONS

59. The AHO agrees with the ITIA's submissions concerning the application of the TACP such that the Player is not eligible for a reduction of his proposed sanction for making an early admission.

D. OTHER FACTORS WHICH MAY MERIT A REDUCTION INCLUDING SUBSTANTIAL ASSISTANCE

60. The AHO acknowledges that the Player has not provided any Substantial Assistance to the ITIA in these proceedings.
61. However, the AHO has given due consideration to the Player's Response and the particular circumstances of this case. The starting point for punishment for Category B3 offending is a ban of six (6) months. However, the range of sanctions under the Guidelines may be adjusted upward or downward to account for aggravating or mitigating factors.
62. The starting point may best be understood by reference to what a "classic case" of offending within this category might look like, the hallmarks of which are set out in the Guidelines.
63. This case sits only marginally within the "*several offences*" element of that categorisation because there are only two. But for the second offence, it could well have been placed in a lower category altogether. Furthermore, while the Player did have brief communications with Mr. [REDACTED] these were ultimately curtailed by the Player, and the degree of planning or premeditation was for all

intents and purposes, minimal. Additionally, it is accepted that the Player received no money in connection with the offences. Therefore, the AHO concludes that this is not a “classic case” of offending, but one that falls at the lower end of the category in terms of seriousness.

64. There are also significant mitigating factors which are worthy of consideration. The Player appears to demonstrate genuine remorse and is acknowledged to be of good character. His relative youth, lack of maturity, and inexperience on the professional tennis circuit at the time of the events are also relevant in the context of the relative seriousness of the offenses. He is of modest financial means, reliant on limited sponsorship and other small sources of income to support his career which is ongoing. While it is acknowledged that the Player initially entertained the approach made by Mr. [REDACTED] he ultimately stepped back and did not carry through with any corrupt act. This ability to disengage from wrongdoing, even if belatedly, weighs in his favour.
65. The AHO notes that the Player did appear to minimise his knowledge of the corrupt activities at the early stages of the investigation, but he ultimately admitted the offences. In the circumstances, an admonishment would not be appropriate. However, given the existence of the various mitigating factors, a sanction at the lower end of the available range, and below the usual starting point for this category, is both fair and proportionate.
66. Accordingly, the AHO concludes that the Player should receive a ban of two (2) months.

E. THE FINE

67. The Guidelines include The Fines Table, which shows several of scales based on the number of Offenses that are proven or admitted. In the present case, the Player has admitted two (2) offenses in relation to two (2) matches which means a fine of US\$0 – 25,000 would be appropriate in the circumstances (which notionally equates to a US\$5,000 fine per offence)

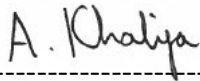
68. The ITIA submits that the appropriate fine in this case is US\$5,000 (with US\$2,500 suspended), which is at the lower end of the scale in the circumstances.
69. The Guidelines stipulate that the amount of any fine should reflect the categorisation of the offense. Considering the number of offenses, the categorisation of the offense as B3, the Player's Response and the ITIA's submissions, the AHO agrees with the ITIA's submissions, and sets the fine at US\$5,000, with payment of US\$2,500 of that amount suspended, provided that no other Corruption Offenses are committed, discovered, or proven against the Player for the period of his suspension.

VIII. DECISION

70. The Player, a Covered Person as defined in Section B.10 of the 2025 TACP, is liable for Corruption Offenses pursuant to the following section of the 2022 TACP:
- (a) D.2.a.ii – In the event any Player knows or suspects that any other Covered Person or other individual has committed a Corruption Offense, it shall be the Player's obligation to report such knowledge or suspicion to the ITIA as soon as possible.
71. The Player is also liable for Corruption Offenses pursuant to the following section of the TACP 2023:
- (a) D.2.a.i – In the event any Player is approached by any person who requests the Player to (i) influence the outcome or any other aspect of any Event, or (ii) provide Inside Information, it shall be the Player's obligation to report such incident to the ITIA as soon as possible, even if no money, benefit or Consideration is offered or discussed.
72. The player shall receive a ban of two (2) months.

73. The player shall be fined US\$5,000 (with payment of US\$2,500 of that amount suspended, provided that no other Corruption Offenses are committed, discovered, or proven against the Player for the period of his suspension).
74. Pursuant to section G.4.e of the 2025 TACP, this award on sanction is to be publicly reported.
75. Pursuant to section G.4.d of the 2025 TACP this award on sanction is a full, final, and complete disposition of this matter and is binding on all parties.
76. This Decision can be appealed to Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne, Switzerland within twenty business days from the date of receipt of the Decision by the appealing party.

Dated at Riyadh, Saudi Arabia this 15th day of August 2025.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Khalifa", is written over a horizontal dashed line.

AMANI KHALIFA, Anti-corruption Hearing Officer