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№ 24

13.02.2025

TO:
FIDE Council and
FIDE Management Board
office@fide.com

Re: Advertising and Screening of Pro-War Film by Chess Federation of Russia

Dear Members of the FIDE Council and FIDE Management Board,

The Ukrainian Chess Federation (“UCF”) writes to bring your attention to an upcoming event planned by the Chess Federation of Russia (“CFR”) that violates both the FIDE Charter and the Ethics and Disciplinary Code (“EDC Code”).

Specifically, on Sunday, 9 February 2025, the CFR “invite[d] all chess fans over 18 years old to watch the documentary ‘At the Edge of the Abyss,’ at a screening to take place at its headquarters on 17 February 2025.¹ The film, as described by the CFR, depicts “the story of the combat path of the Donbass assault battalion ‘Somalia’ during the operation to liberate Mariupol in the spring of 2022.”² Though presented as a “documentary,” the film is in fact Russian propaganda that purports to legitimize Russia’s illegal full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and its continued occupation of Ukrainian territory. The film’s tone and intent is clear even from the CFR’s own description quoted above, which characterizes Russia’s violent assault on the Ukrainian city of Mariupol as a “liberation.” In reality, it is well known that Russia and its affiliated forces razed Mariupol to the ground, indiscriminately shelling residential areas, and killing thousands of civilians.³

¹ See https://ruchess.ru/news/inform/federatsii_shakhmat_rossii_priglashaet_na_prosmotr_dokumentalnogo_filma_u_kraya_bezdny/; Appendix 1 (Event advertisement on the CFR website, with English translation).

² Appendix 1 (Event advertisement on the CFR website, with English translation).

³ For example, a Human Rights Watch Report from February 2024 describes Russian forces’ actions in Mariupol, which remains under Russian occupation to this day. Human Rights Watch, “*Our City Was Gone*” Russia’s Devastation of Mariupol, Ukraine, available at https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2024/02/ukraine0224web_0.pdf.

While the film’s subject-matter is not directly related to chess, the event is hosted by the CFR at its headquarters—the Central House of Chess Players in Moscow—and is expressly aimed at “all chess fans.”⁴ The UCF, as the national chess federation of the country whose invasion is being glorified by this film, is directly affected by this screening. By hosting this event, the CFR is perpetuating a harmful narrative that legitimizes Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, further aggravates relations between the CFR and UCF, and harms Ukrainian chess players (including those currently living under Russian occupation in Mariupol and elsewhere in Ukraine). The CFR’s conduct is plainly inconsistent with the FIDE Charter and the EDC Code, including but not limited to FIDE’s Principles (FIDE Charter, Art. 4.3, 4.4, and 4.8), as well as Arts. 6.1 (ethical values and principles), 6.10 (integrity), 6.15 (good faith), 7.1 and 7.2 (FIDE principles) of the EDC Code.⁵

As the FIDE Council and FIDE Management Board are aware, this is not the first time that the CFR has violated the FIDE Charter and EDC Code in connection with its conduct in the years since Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.⁶ The FIDE must not condone yet further misconduct by the CFR to the detriment of the UCF, its members and the wider chess community. Accordingly, we respectfully request that the FIDE President or another appropriate representative of FIDE Council or its Management Board take remedial action against the CFR consistent with Articles 10.6 to 10.10 of the EDC Code, directing that the CFR immediately cancel this event and cease all associated publicity.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, which is of critical importance to the UCF.

Sincerely,
1st UCF President



Volodymyr KOVALCHUK

Enclosed: Appendix 1 - Event advertisement on the CFR website (with English translation).

⁴ Appendix 1 (Event advertisement on the CFR website, with English translation).

⁵ The UCF does not at this stage request referral of this matter to the Ethics & Disciplinary Commission (the “EDC”), but reserves its right to raise this matter directly with the EDC at a later stage, as well as any other complaints associated with any and all violations of the FIDE Charter and EDC Code by the CFR.

⁶ See FIDE EDC First Instance Panel Decision in Case No. 11/2023 (24 Jun. 2024); FIDE EDC Appeal Chamber Decision in Case No. 11/2023 (12 Sept. 2024). This matter is the subject of ongoing appeal proceedings commenced by the UCF before the Court of Arbitration for Sport.