

## **Protest of the Ilham Aliev**

Dear Colleagues,

I recently received a letter from Arvydas Mockus, which was deeply disappointing. As the Azerbaijan Chess Composition Commission, we categorically reject the allegations made against us. These accusations not only target our solvers and my own reputation but also cast an unjust shadow over our entire country.

Azerbaijan has a longstanding tradition in both chess and chess solving. To date, we have organized 43 solving championships, all conducted with the utmost accuracy and fairness. I have served as the Chairman of the Azerbaijan Chess Federation Composition Commission for many years and as the Chief Arbiter of the Azerbaijan Chess Solving Championships for over two decades. Furthermore, I have officiated at the European Championship in Antalya alongside M. Velimirovic and at the World Cup in Moscow with A. Azhusin. In all the competitions I have overseen, there has never been any instance of cheating, nor have I ever allowed such misconduct to take place.

Throughout the years, I have ensured the participation of winners from national chess championships, as well as medalists and competitors from World and European championships in Azerbaijani competitions. Thus, the exceptional results achieved by our solvers are far from coincidental.

I understand that there may be limited knowledge of previous ISC competitions, or perhaps some aspects are being overlooked. ISC competitions have historically encountered various challenges. For instance, Andrey Zhuravlev (Russia), who held the top spot in the world ranking for a considerable period, secured this position through ISC competitions and maintained it for years, despite having no notable achievements in other events or participation in World and European championships. However, no action was ever taken against him.

Are you now attempting to compare Araz Alammadov with Andrey Zhuravlev? Let me remind you that Araz Alammadov is a 16-time champion of Azerbaijan and a renowned chess composer, having won silver medals in European and World championships.

A closer examination of the Category 1 results reveals numerous solvers whose names are unfamiliar yet who have accumulated significant points. Why is their performance not being questioned?

Regarding Category 3, I must emphasize that concerns about the time factor have been raised repeatedly. Our experienced solvers have attempted the problems from Category 3, and the time required to solve them has frequently raised doubts.

During the competition, I instructed all participants to switch off their phones and place them on the table. There were only four participants in the room, making it relatively easy to monitor them. The competition regulations do not prohibit switching off and placing phones on the table. If any misconduct had been intended,

do you not think we would have taken precautions while photographs were being taken?

We categorically reject the degrading "agreement" proposed by the 21st ISC Director. It is entirely unacceptable that the competition director has taken an unjust stance against us, particularly since he does not have the authority to make such a decision. According to the competition regulations, such matters should be addressed by the Competition Commission.

**\*\***(ISC 2025 Announcement – After handling possible appeals, the central controller will present the results and their report to the Solving Committee by 20.02.2025. After review, the results will be published on the WFCC website.)**\*\***

It is deeply regrettable that we were not informed of the discussions within the Solving Committee. However, it is apparent that the Resolution Commission did not reach the decision desired by the competition director, which may explain his actions, which we consider to be improper.

As a sign of protest, I hereby declare that I will no longer organize competitions in the 1st category. I have often hosted ISC competitions at my own expense, thereby promoting chess solving among young players. We have even awarded monetary prizes and diplomas, albeit modest ones, to encourage participation.

Furthermore, we had planned to participate as a team in the upcoming congress in Romania. However, the treatment we have received has made us reconsider this decision, casting doubt on our participation.

Throughout this process, not a single reliable piece of evidence has been presented to prove the alleged improprieties. The accusations against us are based solely on the subjective opinions of certain individuals. No violations of the competition rules were recorded during the event.

We live in a democratic society where laws and principles of justice have been established over centuries. Your allegations against our Commission and our solvers are unfounded and lack factual support.

According to Article 11 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, no one may be accused of an offense unless proven guilty. This principle, known as the presumption of innocence, has been blatantly disregarded in this matter. Your approach demonstrates clear bias against our Chess Composition Commission and our solvers.

If this unjust treatment continues, we will be compelled to seek legal action to protect our fundamental rights.

We once again demand full recognition of our solvers' results.

Sincerely, **Ilham Aliev.**

Chairman of the Azerbaijan Chess Federation Composition Commission and  
WFCC delegate of Azerbaijan.