

PATHF rejects the attempt from IHF president, Hassan Moustafa, to destroy Pan-American handball

The International Handball Federation (IHF) Council, under coercion and intimidation by its president, Hassan Moustafa, decided last January 14 to force the division of the Pan-American Team Handball Federation (PATHF) into two separate entities, in an assault on the sovereignty of our organization and the integrity of the sport worldwide.

PATHF has become a victim of a sports leader that manipulates an international federation for his own benefit, a federation whose yearning to make a better world through sport has nothing to do with such petty interests.

Nothing is further away from the sports integrity principles promoted by the International Olympic Committee that the obscurantist governance applied by Moustafa and his policy of fear against member federations.

The decision taken by the IHF Council in its meeting in Zagreb last Sunday, to which the presence of two PATHF representatives (PATHF President Mario Moccia and Continental Representative Rafael Sepúlveda Montalvo) was banned, even though they had the right to be present, seeks a single end: to dismantle the Pan-American family illegally, damaging basic democratic principles, to silence voices opposing Moustafa's regime. Even more, this decision from the IHF Council is illegitimate from its onset: the IHF Congress vote that delegated the decision to the Council did not obtain the necessary two-thirds, as opposed to what Moustafa states: of 66% of affirmative votes required, it obtained 60% (102 affirmatives, 26 negatives and 40 abstentions). And such a decision should have never been attempted to delegate in the first place.

Knowing how imminent the measure could be, dealt with during the last IHF Congress in Antalya on November 11, 2017, PATHF had filed on December 11 a request before the IHF Arbitration Commission to prevent it from being enforced, explaining why it is illegitimate. This commission had 30 days to rule, but has not done so to date.

The unprecedented forced division of our continental federation violates democratic and self-governance principles expressed in the very IHF statutes, as well as Swiss Law, where IHF is located. The IHF has authority to regulate the sport but never administrative matters of an independent entity.

Also, the IHF is forcing PATHF to divide into two federations that must include members that do not fulfill formal and/or sport requirements necessary to be part of the entity.

The only person from the continent in the IHF Council meeting in Zagreb, the president of the Canadian Handball Federation and Chairwoman for the IHF Commission for Development, Raquel Pedercini, was denigrated and yelled at by IHF president for defending the unity of our federation, and threatened to be “removed from her position” for opposing.

PATHF absolutely repudiates any sort of gender violence, both physical and oral, and stands by the equality of man and woman in any level of sports.

This attempt to dismantle our federation is a direct assault on our sport as a whole and, as a consequence, on our athletes. There is no doubt that Moustafa seeks to destroy handball in Pan-America.

We also reject the IHF decision to ban PATHF from organizing World Championships’ and Olympic Games’ qualification events.

Under the excuse that the disproportionate measure was made for the simple fact that Moustafa was not officially invited to an extraordinary assembly of our federation, the IHF seeks to punish PATHF for refusing to be dismantled. In that assembly, held on October 7th, 2017 in Bogota, our federation voted against its division.

Additionally, in an attempt to strangle our federation, the IHF demands that we stop financing handball in Pan-America, and at the same time orders us to freeze funds that belong to PATHF, with no legal basis.

To top it all, it demands an accounting for USD 1,000,000 from a private sponsor, over which IHF has no right at all. PATHF has made the proper accounting of the assets spent from those funds to its members through financial statements duly audited by independent professionals. Each cent was invested in the development of handball in Pan-America.

The reputation of our International Federation is at stake, precisely at a time in which worldwide public opinion demands transparency and good practices in sports entities.

PATHF will seek all legal paths available to stop this outrage from Moustafa and to defend the integrity of worldwide handball from those forces from the past that make lack of transparency and manipulation their only sport.

Pan-American Team Handball Federation