



UNITED NATIONS DISPUTE TRIBUNAL

Case No.: UNDT/GVA/2025/059
Order No.: 143 (GVA/2025)
Date: 8 December 2025
Original: English

Before: Duty Judge
Registry: Geneva
Registrar: Liliana López Bello

DE DOBBELAERE

v.

SECRETARY-GENERAL
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

**ORDER
ON CASE MANAGEMENT**

Counsel for Applicant:

Self-represented

Counsel for Respondent:

Alister Cumming, UNICEF

Introduction

1. The Applicant, a former staff member of the United Nations Children’s Fund (“UNICEF”), filed an application on 3 September 2025, challenging the decision not to refer her complaint of possible misconduct against the Deputy Executive Director, Management (“DED-M”), UNICEF, to the Office of Internal Oversight Services (“OIOS”) for an initial assessment/investigation.

Facts

2. On 3 September 2025, the Applicant filed a motion requesting anonymity.
3. On 18 November 2025, the Applicant filed a motion requesting that the instant case be referred to a Three-Judge Panel.
4. By Order No. 134 (GVA/2025) of 27 November 2025, Judge Wallace, in his capacity as President of the Dispute Tribunal, denied the Applicant’s motion for referral of the instant case to a Three-Judge Panel.

Consideration

Motion for anonymity

5. The Applicant submits that there are exceptional circumstances in the present case that justify a departure from the ordinary principle of transparency by granting her request for anonymization, as recognized by the Appeals Tribunal in *Monasebian* 2024-UNAT-1476, paras. 46-47. In support, she argues that the contested decision was not taken in isolation but is connected with confidential and sensitive issues that are the subject of other cases currently under examination.
6. In this sense, the Applicant further submits that exposing her name in this case would jeopardize the anonymity granted in other pending cases and continue to expose her to retaliation, mental and physical stress, and both career and reputational harm.
7. The Tribunal firmly disagrees.

8. The General Assembly repeatedly stated that the UN internal justice system must be governed by the principles of transparency and accountability. A deviation from that is only warranted when exceptional circumstances are demonstrated (*Buff* 2016-UNAT-639, para. 23).

9. As recognized by the Appeals Tribunal, “[w]hat is required is that an individual put up sufficient material to show that there is a need for anonymization which justifies a departure from the ordinary rule” (*Monasebian*, para. 46).

10. The core issue in this case concerns the Applicant’s allegation of possible misconduct by the DED-M, UNICEF, specifically for abuse of authority by allegedly offering her “hush money” to induce the withdrawal of the evidence she had submitted in a separate case. The Office of Internal Audits and Investigations (“OIAI”) refused to refer the complaint to OIOS for an investigation; a decision that the Applicant looks for the Tribunal to overturn.

11. Consequently, the Tribunal will not need to examine any of the *allegedly* sensitive and confidential information of the separate case to determine the lawfulness of the contested decision in the present case. Should such examination become necessary, the Tribunal will handle all confidential information with appropriate care and may adopt measures to safeguard it as deemed fit.

12. Likewise, the Tribunal will not need to refer to other cases in which the Applicant was granted anonymity, as their context is, in principle, irrelevant to the present matter. If the Tribunal’s assessment changes and it becomes necessary to reference those cases, it will take the steps needed to preserve the anonymity previously granted therein.

13. The mere fact that the Applicant and the Tribunal are aware of the context and recognize that some cases share connected backgrounds does not imply that such connections will be cross-referenced in the Tribunal’s future Orders or Judgments.

14. The Tribunal’s role in this case is limited to determining whether the decision by OIAI not to refer the Applicant’s complaint to OIOS for an investigation was

lawfully exercised. For the said task, all other matters the Applicant raises as justification for anonymization are not relevant.

15. As it follows, the Tribunal finds no exceptional circumstance in this case that would warrant deviating from the well-established principles of transparency and accountability. The Applicant's claim that the matters under the instant dispute relate to sensitive information deriving from other cases is not sufficient.

Conclusion

16. In view of the foregoing, it is ORDERED THAT the Applicant's motion for anonymity is rejected.

(Signed)

Judge Sun Xiangzhuang

Dated this 8th day of December 2025

Entered in the Register on this 8th day of December 2025

(Signed)

Liliana López Bello, Registrar, Geneva