

FIA

Federation Internationale de
l'Automobile



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“Aggressive Driving and
Impartial Arbitration in Formula
1: The Case of the 2021 Saudi
Arabian Grand Prix”

BACKGROUND GUIDE





Dear delegates,

It is an honor to welcome you to the FIA Committee. My name is Andrea Suárez León, and I have the privilege of serving as President, as it was prepared together with my Moderator, Mariana Jurado Leshner, and my Conference Officer, Adriana Caraveo Patron.

I am 16 years old, currently completing my high school studies, and I plan to pursue a degree in image design. I am an active and enthusiastic person, passionate about sports and event organization. In my free time, I enjoy practicing swimming, indoor cycling, and traveling to discover new cultures. I have participated in only one Model United Nations conference, as a delegate, which has allowed me to strengthen my skills in debate, public speaking, and diplomacy. I truly enjoy MUN because it represents a space where every voice matters and where we can learn to work together to solve complex problems.

My expectations for this committee are that each delegate can express their ideas with confidence and respect, challenge themselves intellectually, and learn from the experience. Remember that debate is not only a competition, but also an opportunity for academic and personal growth. If at any point you have questions or need assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. I am here to ensure that your experience in this committee is as enriching as it is exciting.

With great enthusiasm,

Andrea Suarez

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COMMITTEE DESCRIPTION

The Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) is the global governing body of motorsport and a key player in the promotion of road safety and fair competition. Established in 1904, the FIA brings together national automobile clubs from all around the world, uniting them under one mission: to regulate, promote, and safeguard the sport while ensuring that drivers, teams, and fans alike can enjoy the spirit of racing under conditions of fairness, transparency, and safety.

Topic: "Aggressive Driving and Impartial Arbitration in Formula 1: The Case of the 2021 Saudi Arabian Grand Prix"

INTRODUCTION

Formula 1 has always represented the pinnacle of motorsport, combining speed, strategy, and innovation at the highest level. However, with such intensity also comes controversy, particularly regarding driver behavior on track and the decisions made by race officials. The balance between allowing competitive, aggressive driving and maintaining safety and fairness is one of the greatest challenges faced by the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA).

The topic of this committee, "Aggressive Driving and Impartial Arbitration in Formula 1: The Case of the 2021 Saudi Arabian Grand Prix," highlights these issues through one of the most debated races in recent years. This Grand Prix became infamous not only for its dramatic incidents and collisions but also for the way in which the FIA handled penalties and disputes. The controversy surrounding the race raised questions about consistency, impartiality, and the credibility of arbitration within the sport.

The 2021 Saudi Arabian Grand Prix was one of the most controversial races in recent Formula 1 history due to the intense rivalry between Max Verstappen and Lewis Hamilton. The Jeddah circuit was new, extremely fast, and had limited visibility through its corners, which caused several accidents and red flags. These interruptions created confusion and benefited some drivers by allowing them to change tires without losing time. During the race, Verstappen and Hamilton had several on-track battles. In one of the most disputed moments, Verstappen went off track while defending his position and was ordered by the FIA to give it back. When he attempted to do so, Hamilton collided with the rear of the Red Bull, as he was unsure whether Verstappen was letting him pass or had braked too suddenly. The incident damaged Hamilton's car and increased the tension between the two drivers. Verstappen received a five-second penalty for gaining an advantage off track and an additional ten-second penalty after the race for erratic driving during the collision with Hamilton. Despite this, he finished second behind the British driver, leaving both tied on points before the final race of the season.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Aggressive driving and impartial arbitration have long been controversial topics within Formula 1. Over the years, the sport has seen numerous disputes related to overtaking maneuvers, defensive driving, and the consistency of decisions made by race stewards. Formula 1's governing body, the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), has faced ongoing criticism regarding its ability to apply penalties fairly and transparently.

The issue became particularly significant during the 2021 season, when Max Verstappen and Lewis Hamilton were fighting for the world championship. Their rivalry reached its peak at the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix, held at the newly built Jeddah Corniche Circuit. This high-speed street track, with blind corners and narrow sections, created a highly tense environment that magnified the consequences of aggressive driving.

During the race, multiple incidents occurred between Verstappen and Hamilton, including overtakes that went beyond track limits and a collision resulting from a misunderstanding about yielding position. The FIA imposed several penalties on Verstappen, but many fans and analysts argued that the decisions were inconsistent or unclear. This raised questions about the impartiality of race control and the stewards' ability to manage conflicts in a neutral and transparent way. Following the controversy, the FIA announced that it would review its procedures for communication between teams and race control, as well as the criteria for penalizing dangerous or unsportsmanlike behavior. The United Nations did not intervene directly, but international sports organizations and the media emphasized the importance of fairness, safety, and accountability in global sporting events. The 2021 Saudi Arabian Grand Prix thus became a defining example of how aggressive driving and questionable arbitration can affect not only race outcomes but also the credibility of Formula 1 as a whole.

CURRENT SITUATION

The current situation regarding the management of aggressive driving and impartial arbitration in Formula 1 continues to be one of the most debated issues within the sport and among regulatory bodies. Since the controversial 2021 Saudi Arabian Grand Prix, the FIA has attempted to reinforce clarity, consistency, and transparency in its decision-making processes, but it still faces constant scrutiny from teams, drivers, the media, and fans. The perception of favoritism, inconsistent penalties, and unclear communication between teams and Race Control remains one of the FIA's most significant challenges.

In recent seasons, the FIA has implemented several structural changes intended to improve neutrality and prevent the escalation of on-track incidents. These include the elimination of direct communication between team principals and the race director, the adoption of the Virtual Race Control Room (a remote decision-support system like VAR in other sports), stricter guidelines for defensive maneuvers, and standardized explanations for post-race penalties. However, these adjustments have not fully resolved concerns. Even with the updated framework, recent races have

shown that incidents such as unnecessary contact, late defensive movements, or brake checking like behaviors continue to blur the line between competitive aggression and dangerous driving.

Another key factor in the current situation is the evolving nature of modern Formula 1 cars. With increasingly complex aerodynamics and reduced visibility from the cockpit, drivers must rely heavily on split-second decisions while navigating high speed battles. This technological evolution makes aggressive driving both more tempting and more hazardous. Street circuits such as Jeddah, Baku, Las Vegas, and Singapore amplify these risks due to their narrow layouts and blind corners, often resulting in controversial stewarding decisions that influence race outcomes. From a governance perspective, the United Nations, while not directly involved in motorsport regulation, has emphasized values such as transparency, safety, fairness, and impartial conflict resolution in international sports. These principles have been indirectly referenced in discussions around FIA reform, especially after high-profile controversies. Maintaining the credibility of arbitration is essential not only for competitive integrity but also for the global reputation of Formula 1 as a sport that claims to uphold fairness and equal treatment.

Teams and national federations are increasingly divided in their perspectives. Some advocate for stricter rules, arguing that aggressive driving causes unnecessary risks and affects championships through reckless behavior. Others believe that Formula 1 is fundamentally a high-stakes, high-intensity sport where aggressive competition is part of its identity and that excessive regulation diminishes the excitement and unpredictability of racing. Drivers themselves often differ as well. Those who favor precision and clean racing support clearer sanctions, while those with more assertive styles push for fewer restrictions on wheel-to-wheel combat. The media also plays a large role in shaping the current situation. Each controversial incident sparks debates about the consistency of penalties, the competence of stewards, and whether some drivers or teams receive special treatment. Social media amplifies this even further, creating pressure on the FIA to justify its decisions more thoroughly and adopt reforms at a faster pace.

If these issues are not addressed properly, the potential consequences for Formula 1 are significant. A damaged reputation for the FIA, increased safety risks, championship results influenced by subjective rulings, loss of trust from teams and fans, and heightened tensions between drivers who feel unfairly penalized or insufficiently protected. On the other hand, effective reform supported by transparent criteria, improved stewarding training, better use of technology, and consistent communication could strengthen sporting integrity, promote safer racing, and reinforce global confidence in the fairness of Formula 1.

COUNTRY BOX

Antonio Maria Giovinazzi

Carlos Sainz Vázquez de Castro

Charles Marc Hervé Perceval Leclerc

Daniel Joseph Ricciardo

Esteban José Jean-Pierre Ocon-Khelfane

Fernando Alonso Díaz

George William Russell

Kimi-Matias Räikkönen

Lance Strulovitch

Lando Norris

Lewis Carl Davidson Hamilton

Max Emilian Verstappen

Mick Schumacher

Nicholas Daniel Latifi

Nikita Dmitryevich Mazepin

Pierre Jean-Jacques Gasly

Sebastian Vettel

Sergio Michel Pérez Mendoza

Valtteri Viktor Bottas

Yuki Tsunoda

GUIDE QUESTIONS

- I. What is the official position of your assigned pilot or team regarding aggressive driving in Formula 1, and how has this position been reflected in past incidents or races?
- II. How has your pilot or team been affected by aggressive driving from other competitors, and what consequences (sporting, technical, or reputation) have resulted from these situations?
- III. What actions have your pilot team or national motorsport authority taken in the past to address issues related to dangerous maneuvers or inconsistent FIA arbitration?
- IV. What improvements or changes does your delegation believe the FIA should implement to ensure clearer, fairer, and more impartial decision-making during races?
- V. Based on the behavior, driving style, and the history of your assigned pilot, what solutions or regulatory adjustments would your delegation propose to balance competitive racing with safety and fairness?

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