

What should NABU leadership have done following Bihus.info investigation?

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When **NABU received information about the alleged violations committed by detectives and the deputy director, the agency should have immediately suspended them from office**. NABU's deputy director Gizo Uglava should have voluntarily made a statement requesting for personal suspension while the internal investigation takes place. This should be common practice and is the appropriate response given public expectations of the Bureau.

Secondly, the **information received concerning the alleged violations should have been immediately submitted for investigation not only to NABU's Internal Control Unit, but also to the State Bureau of Investigations** (on those possible crimes which fall under the SBI jurisdiction). NABU's director should provide full access to all necessary information for the investigation.

If these actions are taken, it would not automatically confirm the guilt of detectives and deputy director. Conversely, it will ensure the Internal Control Unit is able to conduct an objective and independent investigation process. Based on evidence collected in the course of such investigation, the allegations voiced by journalists will be either confirmed or denied.

Unfortunately, NABU leadership – the director in the first place – had not made these steps immediately. We believe that this is a serious mistake. But it could still be fixed.

Furthermore, NABU should **develop clear internal rules and procedures that allow the agency to detect and identify possible violations conducted by employees**. Such rules and standards exist throughout successful independent law enforcement agencies internationally. The task of NABU leadership is to understand and implement policies used in the best international practices.

Also, NABU should introduce clear internal control guidelines for avoiding of extra-procedural communications of NABU employees with the potential subjects of their investigations, conduct an audit of communications of NABU employees with other governmental agencies and private entities that are subjects to NABU investigations, as well as introduce an effective policy on cooperation with 'off-duty' agents that shall include provisions on confidentiality.

In addition to this, the material published by journalists should not undermine the overall credibility of NABU's work. NABU detectives have habitually proven their professional integrity and commitment to agency's philosophy. This claim can be swiftly substantiated. Many former corrupt untouchables have been made accountable as a consequence of NABU's work. This includes (just to name a few) several directors of defense plants, the deputy Minister of Defense, head of the State Fiscal Service Roman Nasirov and former head of the parliamentary committee Mykola Martynenko.

NABU must learn from past lessons. The Agency must strive to make itself more robust, effective and publicly trusted.