

Sudanese football giants Al Hilal and Al Merriekh will once again make Kigali their home in continental football after the Confederation of African Football (CAF) approved Rwanda as the venue for their home matches in the 2026/27 CAF Champions League.

The decision comes as Sudan continues to grapple with a civil war that has left domestic football suspended, forcing the country's leading clubs to seek alternative venues for international competition.

According to reports, Al Hilal will play their home matches at Amahoro Stadium, while Al Merriekh will use Kigali Pelé Stadium.

The two clubs are no strangers to Rwanda, having spent last season competing in the BK Pro League under a special arrangement approved after football activities in Sudan were disrupted by the conflict.

Al Hilal enjoyed a remarkable campaign, winning the 2025/26 BK Pro League title with three matches to spare after defeating Gasogi United 2-1. They finished 14 points clear of APR FC, the highest-ranked Rwandan side, underlining their dominance throughout the season.

Al Merriekh also impressed, ending the season third behind APR after consistently challenging near the top of the table despite playing away from home throughout the campaign.

Under the competition rules, although Al Hilal lifted the league trophy, they were not eligible for Rwanda's CAF qualification slots or the prize money reserved for domestic clubs. APR, as the highest-placed Rwandan team, secured the country's Champions League berth.

Al Hilal's continental pedigree was also on display last season, with the Sudanese champions reaching the latter stages of the CAF Champions League despite playing all their matches away from home because of the conflict in Sudan.

The two clubs have since formally requested permission to continue competing in the BK Pro League for another season, with the request submitted through the Rwanda Football Federation (FERWAFA) for consideration by CAF.

Elsewhere, Hilal Al Sahel, Sudan's representative in the CAF Confederation Cup, has also applied to host its continental fixtures in Kigali and is awaiting CAF's approval.

Backing regional football

Al Hilal has also strengthened its ties with Rwandan football by becoming one of the headline sponsors of the 2026 CECAFA Kagame Cup, which will be held in Kigali from 24 July to 7 August.

The Sudanese champions announced a sponsorship package worth **US\$100,000** to support the regional tournament, saying the contribution was a gesture of appreciation to Rwanda and FERWAFA for hosting the club during a difficult period caused by the war in Sudan.

The Kagame Cup is expected to bring together leading clubs from across the CECAFA region, with Al Hilal also among the participating teams as they continue to build on their growing football relationship with Rwanda.

For the Sudanese giants, Kigali has become much more than a temporary refuge. It has become a second football home, one that has delivered domestic success, continental continuity and now another opportunity to compete on Africa's biggest club stage.