Former Secretary-General of Rwanda’s football federation, FERWAFA, Adolphe “Camarade” Kalisa, has been remanded in custody as prosecutors pursue a high-profile investigation into allegations of embezzlement, corruption and forgery.

The decision, handed down in a Kigali courtroom, has gripped both the sports fan’s and the wider public, raising fresh concerns about governance and accountability in domestic football.

At the centre of the case are claims that Kalisa mismanaged funds intended for the national team, the Amavubi, during several international trips. Prosecutors allege that in 2024 more than forty-three thousand US dollars were allocated to cover accommodation and logistics for a match in Nigeria.

Kalisa is said to have submitted an invoice of about forty thousand dollars, later acknowledging that the hotel had in fact received only twenty-six thousand. Investigators argue that the unexplained shortfall of just over twenty-one thousand dollars points to deliberate embezzlement.

Similar patterns are said to have emerged in 2025, when the federation prepared for a World Cup qualifier. According to prosecutors, in the court documents, Kalisa reported hotel costs of more than fifty-six thousand dollars, though receipts from the establishment suggested expenses closer to half that amount. Questions were also raised about a trip to South Africa, where budget claims were far higher than what witnesses and hotel staff later confirmed.

Central to the prosecution’s case is the suggestion that forged or inflated invoices were used to justify the discrepancies. Much of the attention has turned to a Nigerian agent, licensed by FIFA, who allegedly acted as an intermediary in handling payments and documents on Kalisa’s behalf.

Prosecutors argue that this arrangement allowed room for manipulation, while Kalisa’s defence insists the use of intermediaries was routine and legitimate.

In court, Kalisa has denied wrongdoing, insisting that he relied on trusted agents to process financial documentation. His lawyers argue that any inconsistencies were administrative, not fraudulent, and they stress that their client is willing to reimburse any sums found to have been wrongly handled. They further accuse the prosecution of rushing the matter to court without presenting full evidence, undermining his right to mount a proper defence. At one stage, the defence even

raised jurisdictional questions, claiming certain transactions fell outside the court’s authority.

Judges nevertheless sided with the prosecution’s request for continued detention, citing risks that Kalisa might interfere with witnesses or tamper with evidence. Bail applications have been rejected despite arguments from the defence about his health and their willingness to provide collateral. Some hearings have been adjourned to give both sides more time to review files and prepare submissions.

With national pride and international credibility at stake, observers argue the outcome will shape not just public trust in FERWAFA but also Rwanda’s standing in the global football community.

For now, Kalisa remains in custody for 30 days, as prosecutors build their case. His next court appearance is expected to clarify whether formal charges will be filed and a full trial opened.