

Barely a week after being released following a court-approved plea agreement, Rwanda's football president, Fabrice Shema Ngoga, has resigned, ending his 13-month reign after a private business case involving bounced cheques and fraud put his leadership under scrutiny.

The resignation came only days after a court approved the plea agreement, bringing renewed attention to the legal case and the integrity concerns surrounding his leadership.

Shema's departure did not come on the football pitch. Instead, it followed two bounced cheques, a period in police custody and a plea deal before a Nyarugenge Primary Court.

Mr Shema resigned as president of FERWAFA with immediate effect on 29 September.

In a letter seen by Rwanda Dispatch and addressed to the General Assembly, he said an "integrity issue" had made stepping aside "the most responsible course of action" to protect the federation's credibility and public confidence.

He also asked that his resignation not be interpreted as meaning more than what had been established through the proper legal procedures.

The letter did not mention FERWAFA's eligibility rules.

The Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB) arrested Shema on 11 August over an allegedly unfunded cheque.

RIB said the case was linked to his private business activities and not to his work at FERWAFA.

Prosecutors later told Nyarugenge Primary Court that Shema had issued two cheques to ABZL, a company in the United Arab Emirates, one for \$400,000 and another for \$200,000, on 5 August 2025.

His lawyer disputed the timeline, saying the bank had dishonoured the cheques on 16 July 2025, before the date prosecutors gave for the alleged offence.

On 2 September, the court ordered Shema to remain in custody for 30 days while investigators continued examining the allegations.

On 17 September, the court postponed his bail appeal after his lawyers asked for more time to negotiate an agreement with prosecutors.

The agreement was reached on 21 September and approved by the court the following day.

Under the agreement, Shema admitted two charges: issuing cheques without sufficient funds and obtaining another person's property through fraud.

He was sentenced to six months in prison, suspended for one year, and fined Rwf3 million.

Prosecutors told the court that he had already paid the money involved in the case.

Shema was released after spending about 42 days in custody.

Seven days later, he resigned from FERWAFA.

The case also raised questions about whether Shema could continue serving as FERWAFA president following his conviction.

FERWAFA's rules contain restrictions on officials who have been sentenced to prison.

However, the interpretation of the rule became a matter of debate because Shema's six-month sentence was suspended.

Analysts said the law did not necessarily mean that a person automatically lost their position in such circumstances.

Other reports quoted FERWAFA's rules differently, with some saying the restriction applies to sentences of "more than six months".

The distinction matters because Shema's sentence was exactly six months.

His resignation, however, brought an end to the immediate question over whether he could remain in office.

Shema was elected FERWAFA president on 30 August 2025 after previously serving as president of AS Kigali for six years.

He said he would not take a salary from FERWAFA and would instead donate the \$200,000 he would have earned over four years to developing young football talent.

During his presidency, FERWAFA appointed English coach Stephen Constantine on a two-year renewable contract to lead the senior men's national team and the Under-23 side.

Rwanda later won its FIFA Series group unbeaten, beating Grenada 4-0 and Estonia 2-0.

Soon after his election, Shema met FIFA president Gianni Infantino in Rabat.

In February, he was elected to the executive committee of the Council of East and Central Africa Football Associations (CECAFA). It is not yet clear whether he will retain that position following his resignation from FERWAFA.

Shema's resignation leaves FERWAFA facing a leadership transition only 13 months into his four-year mandate.

The federation's executive committee includes First Vice-President Claudine Gasarabwe and Second Vice-President Richard Mugisha.

FERWAFA has not yet announced who will lead the federation in the interim or when an election for a new president will be held

As of 1 October, [FERWAFA's official website still lists Shema](#) as the federation's president on its Executive Committee page, despite his resignation on 29 September.

Rwanda Dispatch contacted FERWAFA media officer Ruben Ngabo for clarification, but he had not responded by the time of publication.

The transition will also raise questions about Shema's position within CECAFA and how the federation intends to manage the remainder of his four-year mandate.