Fabrice Shema Ngoga, president of the Rwanda Football Federation (FERWAFA), has been released from detention after reaching a plea-bargaining agreement with prosecutors, bringing an end to a six-week legal battle that had put Rwandan football's top official under scrutiny.

The Nyarugenge Primary Court ordered Shema's release on Tuesday, September 22, after confirming the terms of the agreement, under which he admitted to both charges he faced: issuing unfunded cheques and fraudulently obtaining another party's property.

Shema was arrested by the Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB) on August 11 over two cheques worth a combined $600,000, roughly Rwf883.5 million, issued to ABZL International General Trading LLC, a company based in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The dispute traced back to a commercial agreement worth more than €1 million, signed in January 2024 between ABZL and Africa Medical Supplier Plc, a medical equipment company owned by Shema, tied to a World Bank-funded contract to supply equipment to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Prosecutors said Shema's company failed to meet its payment obligations under the deal and later issued two cheques, $400,000 and $200,000, that a bank confirmed were not backed by sufficient funds.

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Shema had consistently denied wrongdoing, arguing the case stemmed from a commercial dispute rather than a criminal matter, and told the court the cheques had been altered without his authorization.

He also pointed to his assets, valued at close to Rwf5 billion, as evidence he was not a flight risk and offered them as security for his release.

On September 2, the Nyarugenge Primary Court rejected his bail request and ordered him held for 30 days of pretrial detention, prompting Shema to appeal. During a September 17 hearing on that appeal, his lawyer, Christophe Niyomugabo, told the Nyarugenge Intermediate Court that Shema had signed a plea-bargaining agreement with prosecutors, though its terms had not yet been formally submitted. The court adjourned the case to allow the agreement to be filed.

That agreement was finalized this week, and the court ordered Shema’s release after he formally admitted to the charges.

Shema has led FERWAFA since his unopposed election in August 2025. The federation has not yet issued a statement on how the case may affect his leadership going forward.