

*Rabat-Salé Airport – Royal Moroccan Football Federation (FRMF) President Fouzi Lekjaa said on Friday 13 January 2023, that depriving the Moroccan U23 team from taking part in the African Nations Championship (CHAN), organized in Algeria, is “a very deplorable act.”*

“It is really deplorable to deprive young players who have prepared for a month to participate in this African sports competition,” said Lekjaa to the press, on the sidelines of the reception of FIFA and CAF Presidents Gianni Infantino and Patrice Motsepe, who arrived Friday at the Rabat-Salé Airport to attend the 2022 Club World Cup draw ceremony.

The Moroccan players, two-time CHAN title holders, had arrived Friday morning at Rabat-Salé airport in anticipation of flying to Constantine to play in the tournament, Lekjaa said.

In a statement released Thursday, the FRMF said that the Moroccan team was not able to travel to Constantine in Algeria to play the 7th edition of the CHAN and defend its title, as the final authorization of its Royal Air Maroc flight, official carrier of Moroccan soccer teams, from Rabat to Constantine has not been confirmed.

Following its request for authorization of a RAM flight from Rabat to Constantine, the FRMF was informed on December 22, 2022 by CAF, as the body in charge of organizing the CHAN 2022, that an authorization in principle had been obtained, notes the same source.

Based on this authorization in principle, the FRMF has communicated the details of the plan and flight coordinates of the Moroccan selection in order to obtain the final authorization and continued the preparation of the flight and of the Moroccan squad in the CHAN, including the preparation course at the Mohammed VI Complex of Football in Salé from January 6 to 10 during which two friendly matches against Ethiopia were played, adds the statement.

While the travel of the Moroccan selection from Rabat to Constantine is organized by the FRMF and the kick-off of the CHAN is scheduled for January 13, the FRMF “notes with regret that the obtaining of the final authorization of the RAM flight from Rabat to Constantine has unfortunately not yet been confirmed by CAF,” concludes the statement.