

## TO THE MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS OF FIFA

Circular no. 1951

Zurich, 3 December 2025

### **CAF Africa Cup of Nations Morocco 2025: mandatory release period and inclusion in the Men's International Match Calendar**

Dear Sir or Madam,

When determining the dates of the 2025 edition of the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) taking place in Morocco, the Confederation of African Football (CAF), in the spirit of solidarity, decided to adjust the normal timing of the tournament from its historical January-February slot in an effort to minimise the conflict with the new scheduling of continental club competitions.

In particular, the CAF Executive Committee decided that the CAF AFCON 2025 would take place from 21 December 2025 to 18 January 2026 in order to avoid any conflicts with the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League.

Against this background, following extensive consultations with CAF and European Football Clubs, and in order to reduce the impact on various stakeholders and to facilitate planning and (in the case of clubs) squad management, on 29 November 2025, the Bureau of the Council (hereinafter the "Bureau") took the following decisions:

By exceptional application of the same principle used for the FIFA World Cup 2022, the Bureau decided to reduce by seven days the mandatory release period for the CAF AFCON 2025, so that it instead starts on **Monday, 15 December 2025**.

However, it was also determined that Member Associations participating in the CAF AFCON 2025 and clubs releasing players who would be playing in continental competitions during the release period be encouraged to hold bilateral discussions in good faith to find appropriate individual solutions. In cases where there continues to be a dispute over the release of players subsequent to such bilateral discussions, FIFA will, in mediating between both parties, apply guidelines that take into account the circumstances of each case, including factors related to the timing of matches of affected competitions, the stage of these competitions, the historical and planned involvement of the players in the competitions in question, as well as any other pertinent factors.

Additionally, for the avoidance of doubt, the Bureau clarified that article 1 paragraph 6 of Annexe 1 to the RSTP, which states that “it is not compulsory [for clubs] to release the same player for more than one ‘A’ representative team final competition per year”, is **not applicable** to those players released for both the CAF AFCON 2025 (given that it begins in 2025 but ends in 2026) and the FIFA World Cup 2026.

Finally, and for the sake of clarity, the Bureau decided that the dates of the CAF AFCON 2025 should be **added to the Men’s International Match Calendar**.

We thank you for taking note of the above and should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Héctor Navarro Real, Head of Regulatory Governance & Compliance ([regulatory@fifa.org](mailto:regulatory@fifa.org)).

Yours faithfully,

FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE  
DE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION



Mattias Grafström  
Secretary General

cc:     - FIFA Council  
       - Confederations  
       - European Football Clubs  
       - FIFPRO  
       - World Leagues Association