



AFRICAN CHESS CONFEDERATION (ACC)
CONFÉDÉRATION AFRICAINE DES ÉCHÉCS
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

**PROTEST LETTER FROM AFRICA CHESS CONFEDERATION EXECUTIVE
BOARD ON TREATMENT OF AFRICA LEADERS & TEAMS 46TH WORLD CHESS
OLYMPIAD**

15th September 2026

**To: Uzbekistan Chess Federation,
Organizers- 46th World Chess Olympiad,
FIDE Electoral Commission**

Samarkand, Uzbekistan | 16–27 September 2026

The Chess Olympiad is one of the most prestigious events in the global chess calendar. It is a celebration of nations, cultures, talent and the shared values that make chess a truly universal sport. The **46th Chess Olympiad in Samarkand, Uzbekistan**, brings together the chess community from across the world for days of intense competition, friendship and international cooperation.

However, this is not just another Chess Olympiad.

On **26 September 2026**, the global chess community will make one of its most consequential decisions through the FIDE Elections. Africa will participate in this process with a strong and historic voice, represented by 50 African delegates.

The scale of African participation at this Olympiad is significant. A record 206 teams have registered in the Open Section, while 189 teams are registered in the Women's Section. Africa is represented by 49 federations in the Open Section and 46 federations in the Women's Section.

This is a powerful demonstration of Africa's growing presence, commitment and contribution to world chess.

As President of the **African Chess Confederation (ACC)**, I am proud of the African federations, players, officials, arbiters, coaches and delegates who have travelled to Samarkand to represent our continent.

Our players and officials are facing challenges that could be resolved with goodwill.

1. VISA DELAYS ; AFRICAN DELEGATES CANNOT BE LEFT BEHIND

Ordinarily, an event of this magnitude requires the host nation to demonstrate reasonable flexibility in visa requirements and processing timelines, while at the same time safeguarding its legitimate immigration and national security mandates. As of **15 September 2026**, the African Chess Confederation remains deeply concerned by the number of African players, delegates and officials who are still awaiting visas despite applications having been submitted well in advance and, in several cases, despite the required telex letters having already been issued.

The situation is particularly concerning because the pending-visa records reveal a discernible pattern disproportionately affecting continental leaders, delegates and officials. In several instances, applications were submitted collectively as part of the official delegation, yet while some members have received clearance, no feedback or definitive communication has been provided regarding the outstanding visas of others. **For example, the current pending list includes:**

Africa Chess Confederation Executive Board Members with Pending Visa

- Kenya: Benard Wanjala —Continental President for Africa.
- South Africa: Andre Lewaks — Continental Vice-President & Delegate.
- Namibia : Otto ZNakapunda – Continental Secretary General & Official Namibia Player
- Côte d'Ivoire : Brou Koassi Nguessan Justin – Continental Treasurer & Delegate.
- Kenya : Dennis Wambugu – Personal Assistant to ACC President.

Presidents of Federations – Delegates with Pending Visas

- Zimbabwe: Todd Mapinge — President and Delegate.
- Kenya : Andrew Owili - President and Delegate.
- Eswatini : Vukani E. Dlamini.- President and Delegate.
- Gambia : Mass Jeng – Delegate

What is even more concerning is that these delegates applied alongside the rest of their delegations in their respective countries, including players and Heads of Delegation, whose visas were subsequently granted, allowing them to travel to Uzbekistan, while decisions on the visas of these particular delegates remain pending. With the **FIDE Presidential Elections only days away**, this raises legitimate questions as to why these delegates were the only one left behind despite following the same delegation process and requirements, especially when their presence is critical to ensuring Africa's full and effective representation in this important governance process.

All accredited delegates have the right to vote and this right cannot be transferred or reassigned as per the electoral rules. Should the elections proceed without these duly accredited delegates being granted the opportunity to exercise their legitimate voting rights, and without a clear and satisfactory explanation, the ACC leadership will have no other option but to seek appropriate legal recourse, including moving to Court of Arbitration for

Sport (CAS), and formally challenge the validity of the electoral process and any outcome arising from the disenfranchisement of these African delegates.

2. ACCOMMODATION ;

2.1. Bed Allocation

We are equally concerned about accommodation arrangements being reported by several African federations. The published regulations provided for players to be accommodated in single and twin rooms (two beds).

Even more troubling are reports from heads of delegations that some players have been assigned to share a single bed. This is against Morals where two adults – two men or two ladies share a bed. A case scenario is Madagascar and Uganda – Teams participating in the 3rd FIDE Chess Olympiad for People with Disabilities.

Such arrangements are contrary to basic standards of dignity, privacy and appropriate accommodation, regardless of whether the individuals are male or female. Adult athletes representing their nations at an international event of this stature must be provided with accommodation that respects their personal space, privacy and dignity. This is not merely a matter of comfort; it is a matter of basic human decency and respect for the players.

2.2. Unexplained Delays in Room Allocation

According to the published regulations, room allocation is scheduled to commence at 14:00 Uzbekistan time. However, we have received serious reports of players who arrived after this time being kept in queues for five to eight hours or more, following long and exhausting journeys from their respective countries to Samarkand. A particularly concerning case is that of the **Madagascar delegation**, where players arrived at 4:30am and it was resolved this afternoon at 3pm, were only partially allocated rooms, while others remained stranded in the lobby until the following morning. In desperation, some players reportedly resorted to sharing beds 3-4 players simply to find somewhere to sleep for the night.

Compounding the situation, no meals were provided to some of these players during this prolonged wait. This treatment is deeply concerning and has left players physically exhausted, emotionally distressed and traumatized even before making their first move on the chessboard. Such conditions inevitably affect concentration, preparation and mental readiness, and therefore risk compromising the fairness and integrity of the competition itself.

We must ask: How can players be expected to compete at their best when they have spent the night in a lobby, without proper accommodation or meals, immediately before an Olympic-level competition? This is not the standard of hospitality, dignity and sporting fairness that athletes representing their nations deserve.

3. TEAM HANDICAPPED DUE TO VISA DECISIONS

There is a great deal at stake for every team and every player participating in this Olympiad. Federations have invested significant financial and human resources to identify and field their strongest national teams, with both team objectives and individual ambitions including the pursuit of titles, norms, improved ratings, top rankings and qualification for the World Cup slots available through the Top 100 pathway. For many players, earning a place on the national team is the culmination of months of preparation, training and coaching, sometimes extending beyond six months. Federations and players have made these investments with the expectation of competing on a level playing field at one of the most important events in the global chess calendar. As the host, we therefore expect a reasonable degree of flexibility, understanding and accommodation, particularly in circumstances beyond the control of participating federations and players, to ensure that every team has a fair opportunity to compete under conditions that uphold the integrity, dignity and sporting fairness of the Olympiad.

Against this backdrop, the African Chess Confederation is deeply concerned by the situation involving the Namibian delegation, where two players were denied entry into Uzbekistan upon arrival at the airport and subsequently returned, leaving Namibia with only three players to compete in the Olympiad. **No prior communication or clear explanation has been provided to the federation regarding the denial of entry.** This has placed Namibia at a significant competitive disadvantage through circumstances beyond the control of its federation and players. For an event of this magnitude, we believe such situations require urgent intervention, transparency and a practical solution that safeguards the principle of fair competition.

The consequence is immediate and serious:

Namibia has been left with a five-player team reduced to only three players, through circumstances that were beyond the control of the federation and its players.

We therefore call upon the **Olympiad Organizing Committee, FIDE and all relevant authorities** to urgently address the concerns raised by African federations and restore the standards expected of a World Chess Olympiad.

We specifically call for:

- **Immediate facilitation and fast-tracking of outstanding visas** for African delegates, players and ACC officials.
- **Immediate resolution of inappropriate room and bed-sharing arrangements.**
- **Urgent resolution of cases involving players who have arrived but remain without proper allocation.**
- **Immediate improvement of check-in and reception processes** affecting federations.

The African Chess Confederation will continue to engage constructively with the organizers and the international chess authorities. But let there be no misunderstanding:

The Chess Olympiad belongs to the all members with equal voice. We come to Samarkand not as spectators, but as participants, contributors and legitimate members of FIDE.

And as the world prepares for the historic **FIDE Elections on 26 September 2026**, Africa's voice must be Presented and must be heard.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Benard Wanjala', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Benard Wanjala

President

African Chess Confederation (ACC)