

‘If they find us it’s death or kidnap’: the Eritrean footballers on the run

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As Eritrea internationals use matches abroad to defect and seek asylum, we speak to one of the players hiding in Uganda. The moment Mewael Yosief had been waiting for all his life came a few hours after what should have been the pinnacle of his young football career. Two goals and a man-of-the-match display from the tall midfielder in Eritrea’s 5-0 victory over Zanzibar on 29 September 2019, which set up a Cecafa Under-20 Challenge Cup semi-final against the east African heavyweights Kenya, was hailed by a tweet from Yemane Gebremeskel, the country’s minister of information, praising his performance.

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