

Lorik Cana plays with heart for Kosovo

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After recently being appointed Sunderland's new captain, Lorik Cana has one more reason to be a great football fighter: his remembrance of the war in Kosovo. "What has happened to the Albanians in Kosovo gave me more energy in the field. I want to give my best to make my family and my people proud. That is the most important thing for me. This is my goal," said Cana.

Cana may be the new light of Sunderland, but life has not always been easy for this footballer. He has spoken of the difficulties he has had to endure throughout his life to reach the position of the Premier League. Cana and his family fled the war-torn Kosovo. They arrived in Switzerland, where he had the chance to represent the Swiss, but instead chose to go to Albania once he has established himself at Paris Saint-Germain and Marseille. "I was seven when I left Kosovo with my family. It was almost as if it was not true and the worst thing was that for eight years there was no possibility to go back. We were refugees. When you are refugees, you can not move and that is the most difficult thing. I stayed in Switzerland eight or nine years without the possibility of seeing the rest of my family and friends," said Cana.

However, the new Sunderland player will never forget his roots. "A war is something terrible for people, for a country, for everything. Thank God I didn't lose many people from my family but my friends lost lots of people. They lost houses, they lost everything. It was a difficult time. Everything that happened gives me my power and my energy to make sure I give my best wherever I go. I know everyone in my country, my family and friends are proud of me," he expresses. Apart from playing for his country and the people, he also plays to contribute money to the needy in Kosovo and his mind has always been with his people. These hardships have made him stronger. His father, Agim Cana, was also a footballer and part of Albania's Golden Generation.

Lorik Cana was refused entry to the UK 10 years ago when offered a trial by Arsenal. Then, Cana had some issues migrating to France, but was allowed to sign with the Paris SG team. He later moved on to Marseille Olympics, where he was dubbed the name 'Le Destructeur'. His heart though, does not distinguish Albania from Kosovo. He also plays for the Albania National Football Team and is considered the Albania football star. "I had the possibility to wait and play for France. But for me it was a duty to play for Albania. We are a small country, we are not a top national team. But I am proud to play," said Cana.

"Lorik is a great fighter. Before transferring, I have said that he would become a hero. He has already begun to leave traces," said the Sunderland coach, Steve Bruce.