



Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja

Press Release

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FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CONFRONTS GROWING TENSIONS AFFECTING NIGERIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Government of Nigeria have expressed deep concern over ongoing protests in parts of South Africa calling for the expulsion of Nigerians and other foreign nationals, particularly black Africans. The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Dunoma Umar Ahmed, PhD, made this known when the Ministry summoned the Acting High Commissioner of South Africa, Ms Lesoli Machele, for a meeting on Monday, 4th May 2026.

The Ministry noted that several circulating videos online depicting violence and grievances against fellow Africans including Nigerians are very disturbing, and inconsistent with the long-standing cordial relations between Nigeria and South Africa. The Ministry also confirmed reports from Nigeria's diplomatic missions in Pretoria and Johannesburg of the deaths of two Nigerian nationals, Nnaemeka Matthew Andrew Ekpeyong and Kelvin Chidiebere Amaramiro, following alleged assaults while in the custody of South African security agencies. Mr Ekpeyong reportedly died on 21 April 2026 while in custody of the Tshwane Metro Police Department, while Mr Amaramiro passed away on 25 April 2026 at Livingstone Hospital in the Eastern Cape. These incidents have raised serious concerns regarding the conduct of security personnel.

During the engagement, Nigeria acknowledged statements by South African authorities condemning extrajudicial actions and violence against foreign nationals, but emphasised the need for these commitments to translate into concrete actions. The Government of Nigeria strongly condemned all acts of violence against its citizens and called for thorough, transparent, and impartial investigations into the deaths of the two Nigerians. It further requested the timely sharing of findings, cooperation in providing autopsy reports and relevant documentation, and full access to legal processes for the victims' families.

Nigeria also urged the South African Government to take proactive measures against threats and incitement targeting foreign nationals. The Ministry stressed the importance of ensuring the safety, dignity, and rights of Nigerians residing

lawfully in South Africa, including adherence to due process and professional standards by security agencies.

On domestic reactions, the Ministry acknowledged a recent protest by a small group of Nigerians in Abuja and appealed for calm, urging citizens not to take the law into their own hands. It reaffirmed that the Nigerian Government is actively engaging South African authorities at the highest levels, including a recent telephone conversation between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, Ambassador Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu and her South African counterpart earlier today. Both Ministers agreed to work closely together and find lasting solution to the reoccurring crisis.

The Permanent Secretary, Ambassador Dunoma Umar Ahmed, also echoed Nigeria's commitment to the protection of all diplomatic missions and personnel within its territory, in line with international obligations.

In her response, the Acting High Commissioner of South Africa assured the Permanent Secretary that Nigeria's concerns would be conveyed to Pretoria and reaffirmed that the protests are not supported by the South African Government. She went further to state that steps would be taken to address the issues raised and to sustain peaceful bilateral relations between Nigeria and South Africa as partners in progress. The Acting High Commissioner also commended the role played by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Amb, Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu in resolving the crisis over the installation of Ohanaeze Ndigbo King in Eastern Cape Province.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated Nigeria's commitment to safeguarding its citizens abroad and called on the South African Government to take decisive steps to restore confidence, ensure accountability, and guarantee the safety and dignity of all Africans living in South Africa in the spirit of African brotherhood and unity.

Signed:

**Kimiebi Imomotimi Ebienfa, anipr
Spokesperson,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja
Monday, 4 May 2026**