



Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja

Press Release

No: MFA/PR/2026/088

MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AMBASSADOR SOLA ENIKANOLAIYE, DESCRIBES EVACUATION OF NIGERIANS FROM SOUTH AFRICA AS A DEMONSTRATION OF MR. PRESIDENT'S COMMITMENT TO THE WELFARE AND SAFETY OF NIGERIANS ABROAD

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs wishes to inform the general public that the first batch of 258 Nigerian nationals evacuated from the Republic of South Africa due to recent xenophobic attacks has arrived safely in Nigeria. The special evacuation flight operated by Air Peace Airlines arrived at the International Wing of the Murtala Mohammed International Airport on Thursday, 11th June 2026 at about 10.25AM.

The evacuees, escorted by officials of the Nigerian Mission in South Africa, led by the Acting High Commissioner, Ambassador Temitope Alexander Ajayi, were officially received at the airport by Ambassador Sola Enikanolaiye, the Honourable Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, who represented the Federal Government of Nigeria. The Minister conveyed the heartfelt greetings and assurances of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, to the returning nationals, reaffirming the Federal Government's steadfast commitment to the safety, security, dignity and welfare of all Nigerian citizens abroad.

The evacuation process was coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with the Nigerian High Commission in Pretoria, and relevant stakeholders such as the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Ministry of Aviation, Federal Ministry of Health, Nigeria Immigration Service, Security Agencies, among others. This exercise underscores the Federal Government's proactive and decisive response to protect Nigerian lives and dignity in the face of violence and intolerance. No Nigerian should live in fear simply because of their nationality. The evacuation does not signal defeat; it underscores the proactive and citizen-centred foreign policy of the Tinubu administration. More flights carrying returnees are expected to arrive in the country in the coming days as the evacuation exercise continues.

Addressing the returnees, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs declared that the Federal Government of Nigeria will not stand idly by while our citizens are subjected to attacks and harassment, wherever they may be in the world, hence the swift and necessary action to bring our people home. He commended the excellent coordination of the process by the High Commission of Nigeria in Pretoria and urged all Nigerians in South Africa to remain law-abiding, vigilant, and to report any threats to the Nigerian Mission. He further stated that the Federal Government remains fully engaged with the South African authorities at the highest levels to ensure the protection of Nigerian nationals and to address the root causes of these unfortunate incidents.

The returning nationals are currently undergoing the process of documentation, profiling and necessary medical checks and will be provided with temporary accommodation before reuniting them with their families.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterates its commitment to the protection of Nigerians worldwide and calls for calm and restraint while diplomatic efforts to resolve the situation are intensified.

Signed:

**Kimiebi Imomotimi Ebienfa, anipr
Spokesperson,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja.
Thursday, 11th June 2026**