



Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja

Press Release

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UPDATE ON EVACUATION OF NIGERIANS FROM SOUTH AFRICA

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has successfully facilitated the evacuation of 593 Nigerian nationals from South Africa who were affected by the ongoing xenophobic protests. The first batch arrived at the Murtala Mohammed International Airport, Lagos, via a special flight operated by Air Peace on the 11th of June, 2026, with 258 returnees and were received by the Honourable Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Amb, Sola Enikanolaiye, on behalf of the Federal Government before handing them over to relevant MDAs for the process of documentation and profiling.

The Ministry encountered some logistical delays in operating the second flight, and as a result, some of our nationals were temporarily accommodated at the High Commission in Pretoria and cared for by the Mission. A good-spirited Nigerian voluntarily offered to pay the flight tickets for 66 of them, and they arrived in Lagos on the 24th of June with South African Airways. The second evacuation flight arrived on Tuesday, 30th June 2026, with 269 returnees, and that makes up the cumulative figure of 593 returnees so far.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs wishes to assure Nigerians that three additional flights will be operated in the next few days to ensure that all Nigerians who voluntarily registered to be evacuated and have been duly screened and cleared are brought back safely to the country. The expected number in that regard is 700 Nigerians. The third batch of the evacuation flights will arrive in Nigeria with 271 returnees on Friday 3, July 2026. The expected time of arrival at the Murtala Mohamed International Airport, Lagos is 5.30am.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs wishes to place on record that all the special evacuation flights are fully paid for by the Federal Government and at no cost to the returnees. This clarification is necessitated by

insinuations and false allegations that some staff of the Nigerian Mission were requesting money before enlisting our nationals for the evacuation flights. That is totally false, fake news, and should be discarded.

The Ministry appreciates the very positive coordination and collaboration with relevant MDAs in making this process a success, and we will continue to work together for the good of our country. The evacuation process clearly underscores the priority accorded to the protection of Nigerian citizens overseas, which remains a central pillar of Nigeria's foreign policy and a core responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It also reflects the Government's determination to ensure that Nigerians affected by crises abroad receive the necessary support, dignity, and care. The lives of Nigerians living abroad matters and we are trying our best as a Ministry to give them a sense of belonging.

Signed:

**Kimiebi Imomotimi Ebienfa, anipr
Spokesperson
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja
Thursday, 2 July 2026**