



Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja

Press Release

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CITIZENS DIPLOMACY IN FOCUS: FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS EVACUATED 1,490 FROM SOUTH AFRICA FOLLOWING XENOPHOBIC ATTACKS

The Federal Government of Nigeria has successfully concluded the fifth phase of the voluntary evacuation of Nigerian nationals affected by xenophobic attacks and related security concerns in the Republic of South Africa, reaffirming its unwavering commitment to the protection and welfare of Nigerian citizens abroad under the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR.

The fifth evacuation flight, operated by Air Peace, departed Oliver Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg, South Africa, at 6:30 a.m. South African time on Wednesday, 15 July 2026, and arrived at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos, at 11:30 am. The aircraft conveyed 308 passengers, comprising 305 returnees and two Nigerian Government officials who coordinated and supervised the evacuation exercise.

With the successful completion of this operation, the Federal Government has now evacuated a total of 1,490 Nigerians from South Africa through a series of coordinated humanitarian flights undertaken in partnership with Air Peace Limited and South African Airways.

The breakdown of the evacuation programme is as follows:

10 June 2026: Air Peace – First Flight: 258 returnees

24 June 2026: South African Airways: 66 returnees

30 June 2026: Air Peace – Second Flight: 272 returnees

2 July 2026: Air Peace – Third Flight: 268 returnees

9 July 2026: Air Peace – Fourth Flight: 282 returnees

11 July 2026: South African Airways: 39 returnees

15 July 2026: Air Peace – Fifth Flight: 305 returnees

Total Evacuated: 1,490 Nigerians

The evacuation exercise was undertaken following the sustained engagement with the Government of the Republic of South Africa and in response to the security concerns arising from ongoing xenophobic attacks targeting foreign nationals, including Nigerians.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, working in close collaboration with the High Commission of Nigeria in Pretoria, the Consulate-General of Nigeria in Johannesburg, the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), Port Health Services and other relevant agencies, ensured the smooth coordination of the exercise from registration to departure and necessary reception activities upon arrival in Nigeria. The Federal Government expresses profound appreciation to Air Peace Limited for its continued patriotism, partnership and support throughout the evacuation programme.

The evacuation exercise underscores Nigeria's enduring commitment to Citizens' Diplomacy, which places the protection, welfare and dignity of Nigerians abroad at the centre of the country's foreign policy. The Government remains resolute in ensuring that every Nigerian, irrespective of location, receives the necessary consular support and protection whenever circumstances demand.

While appreciating the longstanding bilateral relations between Nigeria and the Republic of South Africa, the Federal Government reiterates its firm position that all forms of xenophobia, racial intolerance and violence against foreign nationals are unacceptable. Nigeria will continue to engage constructively with the South African Government through diplomatic channels to promote the safety, security and peaceful coexistence of all residents.

The Federal Government further assures Nigerians living overseas that it remains committed to safeguarding their interests through proactive diplomatic engagement, timely consular intervention and strengthened collaboration with host governments. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs urges Nigerians residing abroad to remain law-abiding, register with the nearest Nigerian diplomatic

mission, and maintain regular contact with the missions to facilitate prompt assistance whenever necessary.

The Federal Government welcomes the returnees home and assures them of continued support through the relevant government agencies to facilitate their reintegration.

Signed:

**Kimiebi Imomotimi Ebiefa, anipr
Spokesperson
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja
Tuesday 14, July 2026**