



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ABUJA

PRESS RELEASE

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NIGERIA FACILITATES THE RETURN OF 33 DISTRESSED NATIONALS FROM SOUTH AFRICA

The Federal Government of Nigeria has facilitated the return of a new batch of 33 distressed Nigerian nationals from the Republic of South Africa following renewed incidents of Xenophobic and Afrophobic attacks targeting Africans in the country.

The returnees, comprising 17 adults and 16 minors, arrived Nigeria on South African Airways (SAA) Flight SA060, on Wednesday, 16 September 2026, at approximately 20:30 hours. They were received on arrival by the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM), National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) and other relevant agencies of the Federal Government.

This latest arrival constitutes the 12th consular evacuation from South Africa since the commencement of the exercise on 10th June, 2026, bringing the total number of Nigerian nationals evacuated to 1716. Of this number, the Federal Government fully funded the evacuation of 1388, representing approximately 81 percent of the total number of Nigerians brought home under the exercise.

The Federal Government expresses its profound appreciation to the Private Nigerian Group of Business Friends (PNGBF) and Nigerian Lawyers Association in South Africa (NLASA) for their generous support in sponsoring the air tickets of distressed Nigerians in this latest batch. This commendable intervention underscores the importance of collaboration among the government, Nigerian community associations and other stakeholders in safeguarding the well-being of Nigerians in the diaspora.

The Federal Government remains deeply concerned about persistent Xenophobic and Afrophobic attacks against Nigerians and other Africans in South Africa. The matter has been formally brought to the attention of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS and the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, in keeping with Nigeria's commitment to protecting its citizens and promoting the rights and dignity of Africans across the continent.

As a follow-up to these diplomatic engagements, the Federal Government is actively considering further concrete measures to secure the cooperation of the South African authorities in decisively addressing Xenophobia and Afrophobia, and ensuring the safety, security and dignity of Nigerians resident in the country.

The Federal Government assures Nigerians in the diaspora that protecting their lives, rights, welfare, and dignity remains a priority, and that it will always deploy appropriate consular and diplomatic measures whenever circumstances warrant. The Government also urges Nigerians resident in South Africa to remain vigilant, law-abiding, and to maintain contact with the Nigeria High Commission in Pretoria and the Consulate General of Nigeria in Johannesburg for consular assistance whenever required.

The safe and dignified return of the latest batch of 33 Nigerian nationals forms part of Federal Government's ongoing efforts to assist Nigerians affected by the prevailing security concerns in South Africa and to ensure that vulnerable citizens who wish to return home receive necessary support.

Signed:

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