

The tracker is up to date as of March 11, 2026 and will be updated again this spring. ×

For the latest information, see our [chart](#).

THIRD COUNTRY DEPORTATION WATCH

[Overview](#)[Stories](#)[Resources](#)[Explore Agreements by Country](#)

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Last updated March 11, 2026

Agreement Date: Unknown

Agreement: Undisclosed

Transfers: 29 people were transferred on two flights (November 24, 2025 and January 22, 2026).

U.S. Litigation: *D.V.D. v. Department of Homeland Security*

On November 24, 2025, a U.S. deportation flight arrived in Equatorial Guinea carrying nine third-country nationals who had previously been granted withholding of removal or protection under the Convention Against Torture (CAT). The individuals were not informed of their destination; instead, they were told they were being transferred to a different detention facility. The men were nationals of Georgia, Mauritania, Angola, Ghana, and Eritrea. On January 22, 2026, a second U.S. deportation flight carrying 20 third-country nationals who had previously been granted withholding of removal or protection under the Convention Against Torture (CAT) arrived in Equatorial Guinea. The group included six women and fourteen men from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Mauritania, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Chad. All 29 individuals have been detained at a hotel.

The forced transfers to Equatorial Guinea are part of DHS's broader practice of deporting individuals with final orders of removal, particularly those granted withholding of removal or CAT protection, to third countries. In these cases, DHS sends people to third countries that were never identified as potential destinations during their immigration proceedings and without meaningful prior notice or an opportunity for the individuals to present a fear claim specific to the third country. This practice denies people due process and creates the risk that they will be sent to persecution and torture. It violates the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act, Constitutional due process protections, and international treaty obligations codified in U.S. law

including the prohibition on refoulement. This practice was challenged before a U.S. federal district court in Massachusetts in *D.V.D. v. DHS*, leading the court to enjoin third country removals without notice or opportunity to raise a fear claim, but the Supreme Court stayed the injunction in June 2025 pending a decision on the merits. On February 25, 2026, the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts declared unlawful and set aside the Department of Homeland Security's third-country removal policy, holding that DHS cannot deport individuals under final removal orders to countries not designated in their removal proceedings without providing meaningful notice and a genuine opportunity to seek protection from persecution or torture. In granting partial summary judgment to a nationwide class, the court rejected DHS's position that it could transfer people to "so-called 'third countries'" so long as it lacked specific prior knowledge that harm awaited them, explaining pointedly: "It is not fine, nor is it legal." Although the Trump administration has appealed, the decision is stayed, and litigation in the case continues, the lower court's ruling squarely condemns DHS's recent practice of removing noncitizens with little or no notice to countries, including Equatorial Guinea, without adequate procedural safeguards to prevent refoulement.

Under Equatorial Guinea's immigration law, the detention of foreign nationals must not surpass 60 days, during which authorities must determine whether individuals will be returned to their countries of origin or granted international protection under applicable treaties. Although the third country nationals removed to Equatorial Guinea explained that they had been granted withholding of removal in the United States, authorities informed them that asylum was not available in Equatorial Guinea. The Equatorial Guinean authorities indicated that they would be returned to their countries of origin once travel documents were obtained unless an alternative country could be found.

As of early March, seven out of the nine men from the first flight have been refouled to their countries of origin and one was relocated to a different country where he had the legal right to enter, and ten of the twenty people from the second flight had been repatriated to their home countries. Included in the seven individuals sent to their home countries from the first flight was an individual who had managed to submit an asylum application with the support of civil society actors in Equatorial Guinea: Diadie Camara, who had escaped hereditary slavery in Mauritania, was repatriated there via Morocco on December 25, 2025 and went into hiding, afraid of being found and punished for his escape by the family that enslaved him.

Of the 11 individuals who remain in Equatorial Guinea, which include 10 Ethiopians and 1 Eritrea, only two individuals have been able to apply for asylum in Equatorial Guinea with help from the organization EG Justice. The others have expressed a desire to seek asylum but lawyers have faced significant challenges in supporting them.

The individuals report feeling pressured to return to their home countries, either due to the fact that they are detained and feel unsafe or based on explicit pressure from the government of Equatorial Guinea. This includes an individual who was arrested and tortured in his home country for being a suspected member of an opposition group.

The details of the agreement with Equatorial Guinea to accept third country nationals had not been disclosed. The Trump administration concluded a deal through the U.S. Embassy in Malabo in October 2025, following earlier conversations with the vice president of Equatorial Guinea regarding accepting third country nationals in May 2025 that were continued on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York City in September 2025. The deal was made alongside negotiations over tariffs and U.S. company investment in Equatorial Guinea's gas industry. In exchange for accepting third country nationals deported from the United States, the Trump administration gave the government of Equatorial Guinea \$7.5 million of State Department funds that Congress appropriated for humanitarian assistance for refugees. As the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Minority Report notes, \$7.5 million, "*far exceeds all U.S. foreign assistance provided to the country over the last eight years combined. The money was directly provided to the Equatorial Guinea government, which had never before been done, outside of the United States giving some limited medical supplies. As of January 2026, Equatorial Guinea has received 29 third country nationals, the majority of whom it has quickly sent onward to their country of origin or intends to send onward. This raises the question as to why the money was needed in the first place and what Equatorial Guinea is doing with it.*"

This is especially troubling given the notorious corruption of Equatorial Guinea's government. Because of numerous prosecutions for embezzlement of public funds and corruption in France, the United States, and Brazil, Equatorial Guinea's Vice President Teodoro Nguema Obiang was barred from travel to the United States. However, the State Department provided him with a month-long sanctions waiver to allow him to travel to the UN General Assembly and meet with Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Landau to discuss the deportation agreement.

The Vice President's father has ruled Equatorial Guinea since 1979 as an authoritarian regime that Transparency International currently ranks 173rd out of 180 countries for corruption. The State Department's 2023 Human Rights Report states that "the president and members of his inner circle continued to amass personal fortunes from the revenues associated with monopolies on all domestic commercial ventures..." and that "corruption at all levels of government was a severe problem" in Equatorial Guinea.

A civil society organization in Equatorial Guinea expressed concern that people deported there from the United States would suffer torture or inhumane and degrading treatment (potentially at the notorious Black Beach Prison or Oveng Ansen Prison) given the country's record of "systemic illegal mass arrests, incarceration in squalid conditions, and denial of fundamental due process guarantees." In a November 10, 2025 letter to Secretary of State Rubio, the ranking member of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Jeanne Shaheen pointed to the the State Department's own 2025 Trafficking in Persons Report's "significant concern" about government officials' in Equatorial Guinea "complicity in trafficking crimes" and asked "what protections are in place to ensure

that third country nationals removed to Equatorial Guinea are themselves not vulnerable to human trafficking, smuggling or human rights abuses.” Equatorial Guinea does not have any law for the granting of asylum or way for foreign nationals to apply for refugee protection and has a history of forcefully deporting Cameroonian people who have fled persecution back to Cameroon.

Third Country Deportation Watch is a project of Refugees International and Human Rights First.



Do you have questions for our research team or ideas on how we can improve this resource? Write to us below.

Name

First Name (required)

Last Name (required)

Email (required)

Subject (required)

Message (required)

SUBMIT