

September 23, 2025 12:00AM EDT | News Release

US/Africa: Expulsion Deals Flout Rights

African Governments Should Terminate Agreements and Refuse New Ones



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“These agreements make African governments partners in the Trump administration’s horrifying violations of immigrants’ human rights,” said [Allan Ngari](#), Africa advocacy director at Human Rights Watch. “The African governments implementing these deals risk violating international law, including the prohibitions against refoulement and arbitrary detention.”

In August 2025, a Rwandan government spokesperson, Yolande Makolo, [reportedly](#) said that the country had agreed to accept up to 250 deportees, a much larger number than has been reported for Eswatini or South Sudan, under an agreement, which Human Rights Watch has seen, that includes roughly \$7.5 million in US financial support.

Rwanda’s past role in similar [arrangements with Israel](#), its now-abandoned negotiations for a comparable deal with the United Kingdom, and its own well-documented record of repression raise serious doubts about whether it will provide effective protection for the affected people.

Human Rights Watch has viewed the written agreement between the United States and [Eswatini](#), under which the US will provide \$5.1 million to “build [Eswatini’s] border and migration management capacity” and Eswatini will accept up to 160 deportees from the US. So far, Eswatini has received at least [five people](#) from Cuba, Jamaica, Laos, Vietnam, and Yemen and is reportedly holding them in the Matsapha Correctional Complex under harsh conditions. An Eswatini official told Human Rights Watch that the country is preparing to receive another 150 people. Lawyers and [civil society](#) groups have [challenged the legality](#) of detaining these people.

South Sudan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation confirmed on September 4 that it was holding seven foreign nationals deported from the United States in July, while an eighth person, a South Sudanese national, was released to his family. A government spokesperson said that their status is still under consideration. On September 6, the authorities formally announced the repatriation of one Mexican national to Mexico but did not clarify where the remaining six men are

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Ghanaian president John Mahama [confirmed](#) that his government has agreed to accept third-party nationals who were being removed from the United States. This agreement is limited to West African nationals. So far, five citizens of Nigeria and The Gambia have been expelled to Ghana under the agreement. Prior to their expulsion, US immigration judges had [granted](#) all of them fear-based immigration relief, either withholding their removal under the US Immigration and Naturality Act or deferring their removal under the Convention against Torture.

One of the [five](#), a bisexual man from The Gambia, said in a sworn [declaration](#) filed in US federal court that Ghanaian authorities had returned him to his country of origin after their expulsion by the United States. This case underscores the danger that expulsion agreements will lead to the return of people to countries where US courts had determined they face a serious risk of persecution or torture.

Given the abusive US immigration policies that underpin them, Human Rights Watch urges African governments to refuse to enter into agreements to accept third-country deportees from the United States and to terminate those that are already in effect. In the interim, countries that are party to such agreements should disclose their terms, allow access to independent monitors, refrain from detaining any deportees absent a clear legal basis, and ensure that no deportee is returned to their home country if there is credible evidence that they would face the risk of persecution, [enforced disappearance](#), torture, or other serious harm.

“As the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights special rapporteur on refugees has [said](#), these agreements cannot override governments’ human rights obligations,” Ngari said. “The African Union should reiterate that deportations that do not afford people an opportunity to seek protection from persecution or torture are unlawful, abusive and unacceptable.”

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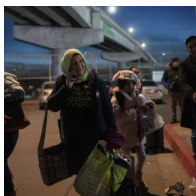
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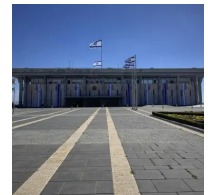
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