

United States Sends Foreign Deportees to African Nation of Eswatini

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The United States has expanded its third-country deportation strategy by transferring five convicted criminals, none of whom are African nationals, to the southern African kingdom of Eswatini. This latest move is part of a broader effort under the previous administration to return foreign offenders to nations willing to accept them when their own countries refuse.

According to the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the deportees included citizens from Vietnam, Jamaica, Cuba, Yemen, and Laos. All five had criminal records and were described as “individuals so uniquely barbaric that their home countries refused to take them back,” as stated by Homeland Security Assistant Secretary Tricia McLaughlin in a post on social media platform X. These deportations follow a precedent set by the earlier relocation of eight individuals to South Sudan after the Supreme Court lifted restrictions that previously limited such transfers.

This tactic of sending deportees to third countries has been a cornerstone of prior U.S. immigration enforcement policies aimed at protecting public safety and national security. With some countries reluctant to accept back their citizens with serious criminal convictions, the Department of Homeland Security has looked to other nations willing to assist. Eswatini, a nation of roughly 1.2 million people located between South Africa and Mozambique, appears to be the latest country participating in such cooperation.

There has been no official statement from Eswatini’s government confirming the agreement or detailing how the deportees will be handled. The kingdom, formerly known as Swaziland, is ruled by King Mswati III, who has held absolute power since 1986. Despite international concerns over political freedoms, Eswatini remains a key regional player and has at times quietly engaged in international partnerships.

While some African nations, such as Nigeria, have reportedly resisted pressure to accept third-country deportees, others like Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Panama have previously received hundreds of individuals through similar arrangements. The United States’ continued pursuit of such agreements underscores its commitment to enforce immigration law while ensuring public safety remains paramount.

This latest development reaffirms the ongoing challenge of navigating global deportation logistics, especially when dealing with hardened criminals. It also highlights how strategic international cooperation can serve as a tool for maintaining domestic security when traditional diplomatic pathways fail.