

## US Sends Five Deportees to Eswatini, Sparking Rights Concerns

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– Categories: Human Rights



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Five men deported from the United States arrived in Eswatini on July 16, prompting public concern and protests over the transparency and legality of the operation. The men from Vietnam, Laos, Yemen, Cuba, and Jamaica were flown into Mbabane, Eswatini's capital, aboard a U.S. military plane and transferred to a local correctional facility.

According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the men were classified as “criminal illegal aliens,” with convictions for violent crimes described as “so uniquely barbaric” that their countries of origin declined to accept their return. Eswatini officials have acknowledged the detainees’ presence, but a government spokesperson said they would not remain in the country permanently and will eventually be repatriated to their respective nations.

Despite the statement, local civic and rights groups have expressed concern over Eswatini’s role in the transfer. Roughly 150 women demonstrated outside the U.S. Embassy in Mbabane on Friday, demanding answers and calling for the men to be returned to the United States. The protest, led by the Eswatini Women’s Movement, questioned the legal grounds on which the kingdom accepted the deportees.

The five are being held at Matsapha Correctional Centre, located 30 kilometers south of the capital. The facility, previously criticized for overcrowding, is undergoing renovations reportedly funded by the U.S. as part of a wider prison support program. Sources inside the prison said the men are being held in solitary confinement in a high-security wing and are currently denied phone access. However, they reportedly receive standard meals, medical care, and have access to basic amenities.

Eswatini Prime Minister Russell Dlamini has dismissed requests to release details of the agreement with U.S. authorities. “Not every decision or agreement is supposed to be publicly shared,” he stated.

Eswatini is the second African nation to receive deportees from the U.S. under these conditions, following South Sudan earlier this month. U.S. authorities have increasingly relied on third-country transfers when original home countries decline repatriation.

Rights groups have raised concerns that such deportations could violate international law if the individuals face mistreatment in the receiving countries.